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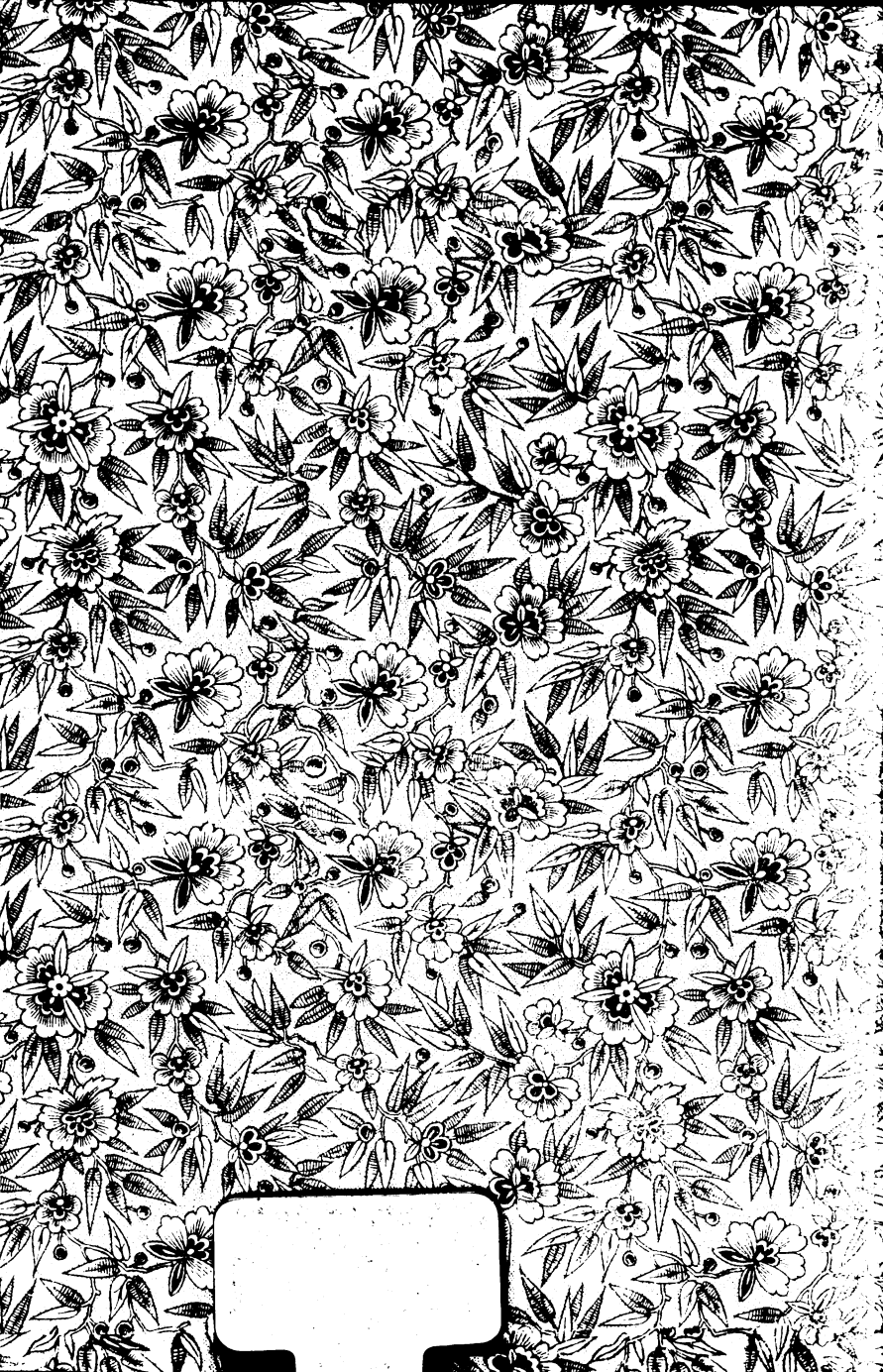
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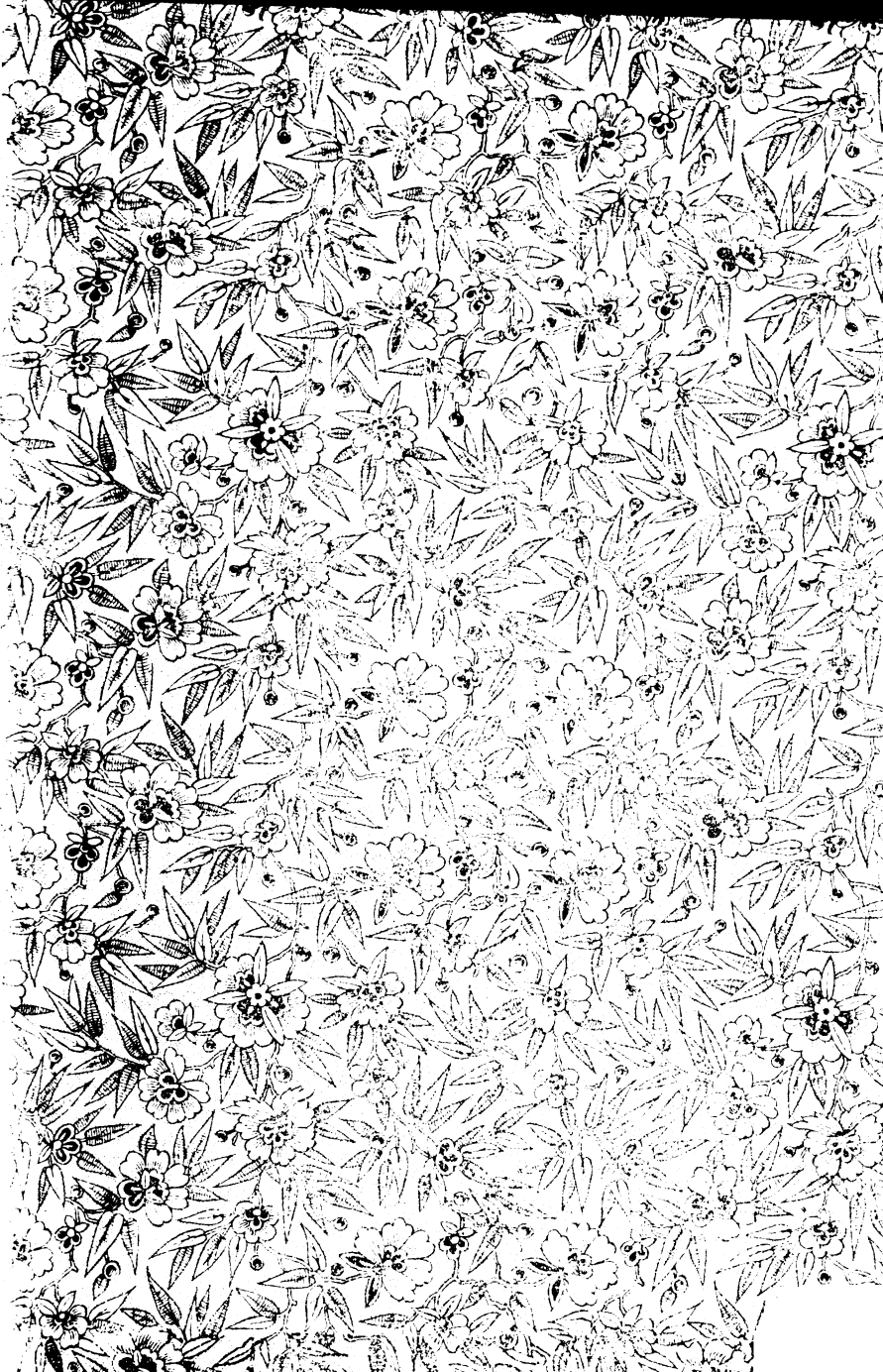
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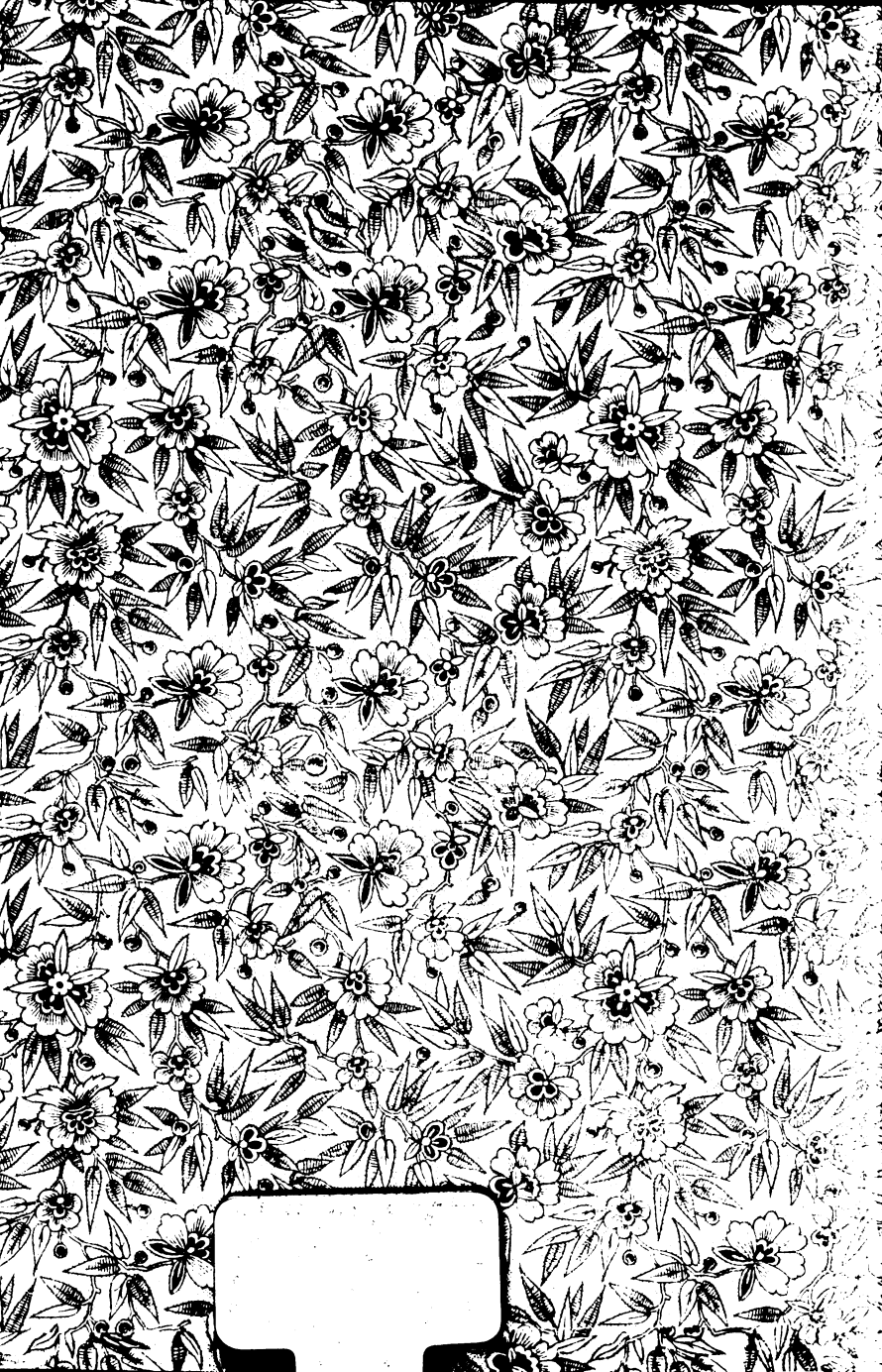
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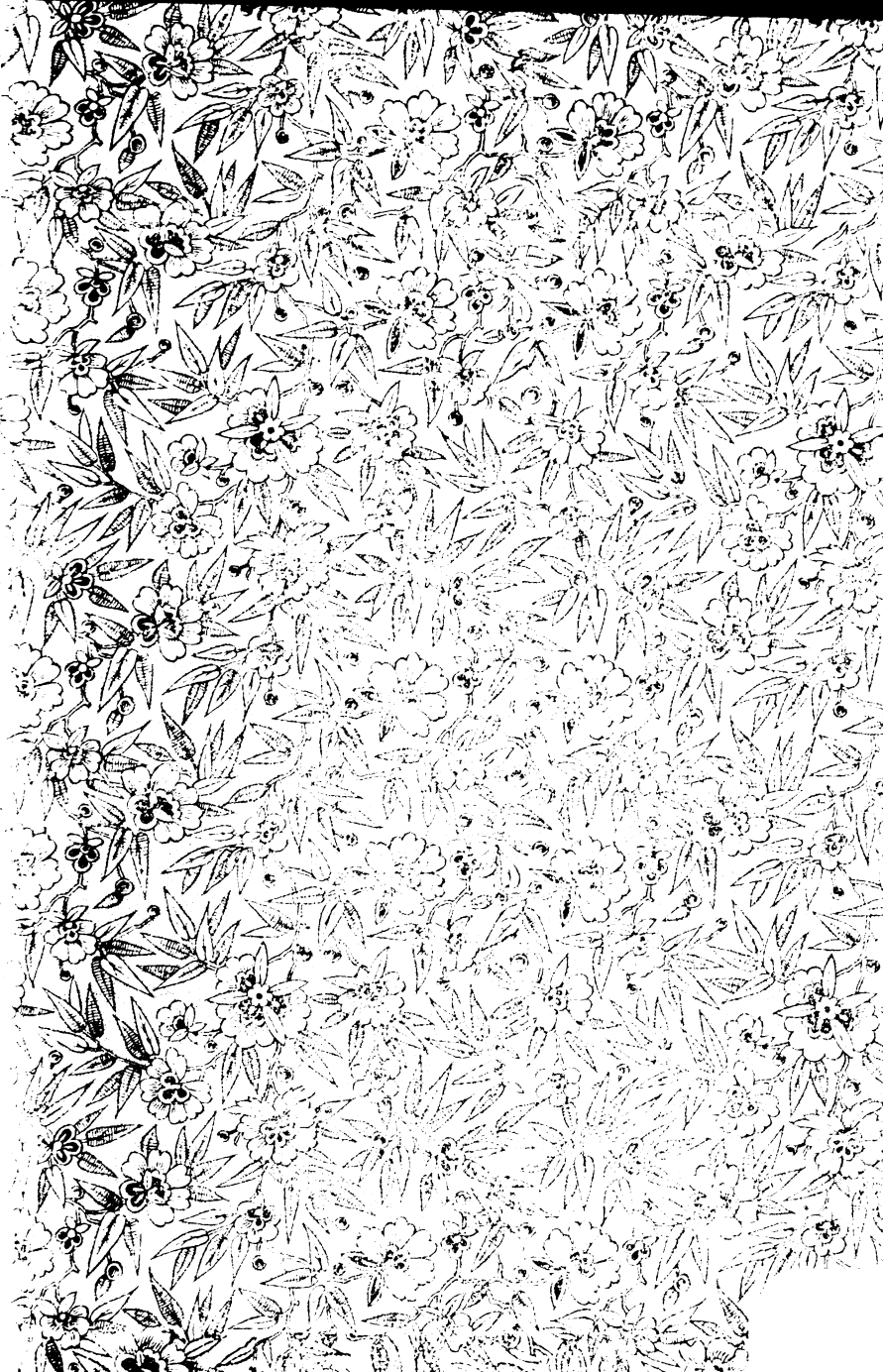
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**BETWEEN THE HEATHER AND  
THE NORTHERN SEA.**



"Birds! we but repeat on you  
What amongst ourselves we do.  
Somewhat more or somewhat less,  
'Tis the same unskilfulness.  
What you feel escapes our ken—  
Know we more our fellow-men?  
Human suffering at our side,  
Ah, like yours is undescried!  
Human longings, human fears,  
Miss our eyes and miss our ears;  
Little helping, wounding much,  
Dull of heart and hard of touch,  
Brother man's despairing sign,  
Who may trust us to divine?"

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

# BETWEEN THE HEATHER AND THE NORTHERN SEA.

BY

MARY LINSKILL,  
("STEPHEN YORKE")

AUTHOR OF "TALES OF THE NORTH RIDING," "CLEVEDEN," ETC.

*IN THREE VOLUMES.*

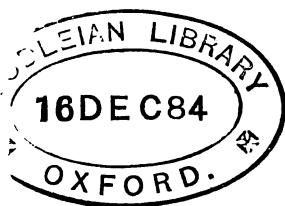
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DEDICATED

TO MY FRIEND OF MANY YEARS

AND MUCH LOYALTY,

ELINOR J. H. MILES.



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# BETWEEN THE HEATHER AND THE NORTHERN SEA.

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## CHAPTER I.

### AT THE BLACK SWAN.

“Yet earth saw one thing, one how fair!  
One grace that grew to its full on earth:  
Smiles might be sparse on her cheeks so spare,  
And her waist want half a girdle’s girth,  
But she had her great gold hair.”

ROBERT BROWNING.

“HAS tha seen yon woman, Isaiah?”

“Whya no: Ah’ll nut saäy ’at Ah’ve  
clearly seen her, Peter; but Ah’ve heerd tell  
on her.”

“What, already?”

“Ay, already. They were talkin’ on her  
doon at Reuben’s, as Ah com’ by. Foälks  
seem puzzled-like.”



"At that Ah doän't wunder, Isaiah. Things is puzzlin'."

"Soä 'twould seem. . . . She's desperst grand-lookin'—hes a turn o' the head like a princess, they saäy. An' 'twas added 'at the man was old, an' seemed of a commoner sort, an' carried hisself in a humbler manner."

"Ay, so he does, but he's no common man. Anyways, I'm mista'en if he is."

"You seed 'em, then?"

"Ay, but 'twere nobbut a flash like, as they went along t' passage. There's nought but Leah i' t' hoose. Ah reckon oäd Luke 'll be rether 'stounded when he comes heäme."

So ran conversation in the kitchen of the Black Swan, the principal inn at Rippongill, one October evening not many years ago.

As Peter Crosswold had intimated, it was early times for gossip about the strangers to be passing from lip to lip. It was not yet half an hour since the train had stopped at the little wayside station to set down the two passengers whose arrival was creating so much stir.

There were very few people on the platform. The place was dimly lighted; the

luggage—there was an immense quantity of it—had been extricated slowly and with difficulty. Then the two strangers had passed up the dark, steep little street to the inn, not asking for directions as to the way.

“Seems as if they knew summat aboot t’ pleaäce,” said Bellman Dykes, who had assisted in housing the heavier luggage at the station, and had been handsomely rewarded.

“Ay, an’ I hev a fancy mysel’ ’at Ah’ve seen the gentleman afore,” said Reuben Folds, the blacksmith. He had caught a glimpse of the strangers as they passed the blazing light of the forge, he had heard a soft sweet voice asking, “Are you tired? are you very tired?” and his big bare arm had hung down in a listless way more than once for a minute or two as he tried to recall the little he had seen and heard. It was tantalizing to have so bare an account to give. The Black Swan knew little of him as a rule; but this evening was exceptional. It was not long before Reuben Folds and Bellman Dykes were joining in the speculative conversation that was being carried on in the smoky atmosphere of the inn kitchen.

As Peter Crosswold had said, there was no one but Leah in the house, and the willing handmaiden was well-nigh distracted between the half-comprehended requirements of the company upstairs, and the increasingly vehement demands of the company in the kitchen. It was a self-evident fact that the girl had no time for conversation; yet she had been somewhat bitingly reproached for her reticence concerning the strangers. Reproach was met with retort, and high words were beginning to be heard above the jingle of glasses, the scraping of feet on the sanded floor, and the sharp yapping of "Turk," Isaiah Scott's lean sheep-dog.

"Thoo can talk fast anuff when there's neä 'casion," said Isaiah, as Leah put down his third glass of ale with a bang that sent part of its contents flying across the table.

"Then Ah'd better keep my talk till 'casion comes," retorted the girl, darting in and out amongst the group for the empty glasses which she should have refilled ten minutes ago. The confusion was increasing rapidly.

"Thoo forgits 'at mah sixpence is as good as ony fine laädy's sixpence 'at iver was

coined," said one who had waited thirstingly.

"Tell us what they call her, Leah?" said another. "An' Ah'll bring tha a fairin' fra Birkan Brigg."

Suddenly—very suddenly—there was an instant silence, an instant cessation of other things than sound. Every head was turned in one direction, pipes were removed from the smokers' lips, and glasses were replaced noiselessly on the table. A singular unanimity of expression, both in countenance and attitude, came over the little assemblage. It seemed more than mere surprise, mere admiration.

The cause of all this was only a girl who stood there in the doorway of the inn kitchen, shrinking a little from the general gaze; a tall, white, graceful figure holding a lamp a little above her head, so that the light fell full upon her face.

No one there had ever dreamed that such a face could be. It was very pale, very pure, faultless in outline as a cameo. The richly curved mouth smiled a little, as if some words had been overheard. The eyes smiled, too

—they were large dark eyes, keen, observant, yet liquid, lovely, and intent with human lovingness. They were deeply set, and looked deeper for the overshadowing of the heavy, shining, pale gold hair, hair of the kind that looks richer for any confusion it may be in. Altogether there was about her that rare look of superior organization which we name distinction. Her dress was consistent, and the air of picturesque carelessness with which it was worn took nothing from its inherent becomingness. Her wide-brimmed velvet hat with its creamy feathers was pushed away from her forehead, her long paletot of rich white fur was open at the throat. Apparently the girl had had no time to take off her travelling attire.

“It is only this letter,” she said, speaking to Leah, who had hurried to the doorway. “Can you send it to the post at once, please? My father will be obliged if you can. It is important.”

More than one volunteer stepped forward, winning gracious thanks, and smiles that were found to be bewildering, even in remembrance. The white figure disappeared with her lamp.

The amazed group sat in silence a little while; and when conversation began again it was carried on in a curiously subdued manner. The stranger's wonderful beauty, her grace, her exquisitely musical voice and accent, had left a unity of impression that was at least conducive to social harmony.

## CHAPTER II.

## FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

*" Festus.* He wrote a poem.

*Student.* What was said of it?

*Festus.* Oh, much was said—much more than understood.

One said that he was mad, another wise;  
Another wisely mad.

*Student.* And what said he of such?

*Festus.* He held his peace."  
P. J. BAILEY.

THE upstairs parlour to which the young lady returned was undoubtedly the best inn's best room; yet it was a little dingy, a little tawdry. But the lamplight did not emphasize its tawdriness; and there was even an air of comfort about the fireside. A big coal fire blazed in the old-fashioned grate; the tea-table was drawn near it; the ancient three-cornered armchairs looked very hospitable.

One of the chairs was occupied. A gentleman sat there who was apparently either sad or very weary; it might be that he was both.

His clasped hands drooped listlessly from the arm of his chair, his eyes were fixed dreamily on the fire, and an air of unconscious abstraction hung about him, seeming as if it were the outcome of his natural and permanent tone of mind rather than of any passing mood.

It may be said at once that he was a man of note among such as understood, and noticeable in his way; but people were seldom impressed at first sight of him. Some openly confessed to disappointment; and the damaging epithet "commonplace" was uttered with a finality of tone from which there seemed no appeal. All the same the epithet was misleading.

Confessing by negatives he was not handsome, nor was he tall, nor had he any commanding personality that could be discerned without occasion. Yet the man's thought-furrowed face, his broad firm brow, his expression of a keen if somewhat visionary



intellectuality, were things not to be passed over if you wished to read his character from such outward and visible signs as it had impressed upon him.

It has been said that he was a noted man, this must be qualified; and it can only be qualified by a paradox.

Noel Irving Bartholomew was known through the length and breadth of the art world of England—nay, beyond this limit—as an artist who was comparatively unknown; that is to say, comparing his public recognition with his recognized genius. He had made his mark distinctively at thirty years of age. He was now nearly fifty, and the outer world was waiting yet for the masterpiece which was to place him, not amongst the immortals—there were those who judged him placed there already—but amongst the fortunate few who are, even in their own day, honoured alike of the critic, the connoisseur, and the utterly uncultivated.

It was some provoking perversity in the man, so it was said, that prevented him doing full justice to his own genius; some lack of the force that springs of ambition, or some

incomprehensible indifference to his rightful place in the world's estimate.

All this was known to Noel Bartholomew ; something more than this was understood of him.

One day a lady who had seen him at his own studio at Kensington, was speaking of him to a younger and more fashionable artist. The lady praised the older man—praised him for the noble work he had done, for the unassuming way in which he spoke of it, for the beautiful absence of self-assertion observable in the man himself.

“ Ah, yes ! ” said the young man, speaking out of his store of rapidly assimilated modern ideas. “ Yes, that is entirely true. It is his want of self-assertion that has left him in the shade. No man comes to the front without it in these days. If one cannot assert one's self, one must at least have friends to do the asserting. The latter is the more dignified way ; but it is slower, and considerably less certain.”

So far as Noel Bartholomew was concerned, this was only a small part of the truth. Other causes than lack of the power of self-lauda-

tion had tended to keep him from the forefront of the time. The world that talked so much of the man, and assumed such intimate knowledge of him, of his life, and of his work, would, if the truth could have been laid bare, have been surprised to find that after all it had known nothing; that it had interested and amused itself sorely by conjecture.

The first thing experience of life had really taught him, was the value of silence concerning the greater facts of his life. He had acquired the gift; he had found that it cost him friends, and he had also found that it was a cause of misunderstanding. Nevertheless he had proved its wholesomeness.

“Fine aspirations, generous convictions, purposes, they are thought very fine; but it is good on various accounts to keep them rather silent; strictly unvocal, except on call of real business, so dangerous are they for becoming conscious of themselves. Most things do not ripen at all except underground. And it is a sad but sure truth, that every time you speak of a fine purpose, especially if with eloquence, and to the admiration of bystanders, there is the less

chance of your ever making a fact of it in your poor life."

So Carlyle had written, so Bartholomew had thought long before, and as he lived the thought deepened to conviction. Thus it came to pass that if his work failed to appear, the world had only its own reason why; and when it did appear, it was not always so clearly understood as it might have been if the man's artistic principles had been better comprehended.

It was granted that his work was original—that was the drawback of it—an atmosphere of criticism, a taint of doubt hangs about all true originality. Only the determinedly persistent keep on undaunted.

Most men had blamed Bartholomew; there was hardly one to understand.

"There are artists with half his talent who are making money as fast as if they were coining it," said a gentleman who was admiring one of Bartholomew's pictures; it hung on the wall of one of the finest studios in London.

The owner of the studio paused a moment.

"Are you sure that Bartholomew has any talent at all?" he asked.

The visitor understood.

"You mean that he has genius? Granted; but why then does he turn it to so little practical use?"

"Is pure genius, *sans* talent, of practical use to anybody?" asked the artist, knowing the thing he spoke of. "Is it not rather a tyrannous thing, oft enough blind in its tyranny, cruel in its imperiousness? A man who is blessed with it, if blessing it be, can do no other than obey it. He must obey, do the thing he is moved to do, or he must do nothing. It is talent that can do as it will, that can foresee, calculate, make certain that every step is a step onward. Noel Bartholomew is a fool in the estimation of men of talent."

There were times, and they recurred often, when he was a fool in his own estimation.

It was only natural that as he sat there in the dingy parlour of the Yorkshire inn some grave thoughts should beset him. His daughter, who sat at his feet, with her fair

shining head resting upon his knee, refrained from trying to distract his thoughts.

Let him think, let him grieve; he would turn to her for comfort when he wanted it.

There was no one else to comfort him now. Three years ago, just when the world had begun to see some possibility of his doing himself justice at last, his wife had died. She had gone from him suddenly, and the shock had overpowered him so grievously that his friends had despaired of his full return to life and the work of life. They saw no reason yet for being sanguine. It was at their instance that he was about to try what change of scene would do.

This was not the change they had desired for him; but here he had in a quiet, deliberate way expressed his wish to decide for himself. He would go back to the Yorkshire village where he had first met his wife. If he might not go there, it would be useless going elsewhere.

It was night now, and only that morning he had, with painful unwillingness, snapped the last thread that bound him to the life he had lived and loved so many years; for so

long as his wife lived, he had enjoyed existence in his own way, if not in the world's way. His undeserved obscurity, if such it could be called, had not been undesired; and his comparatively small gains had never been so small as to narrow his soul's life, to compel him to live it within the deadening grasp of anxiety. He had been able to provide all necessary things and some luxurious ones for his little household, but he had given no thought to the future. Latterly he had taken no thought for the present—he had lived in the past. To-night the past was more vividly with him than ever.

Was it possible that twenty years had come and gone since he sat there before—twenty years of labour, of aspiration, of success, of failure!

There had been a great gain at the beginning, an expansion of his own life in the quiet sunshine that another life had made. Then there had been a long peace, a long satisfaction. Had it been quite good for him, that great unbroken calm?

He could never be quite sure. It had been beautiful; he had been grateful; it was over. That was the sum of the years.

He was grateful still. It was as much gratitude as affection that was moving in him now as he laid his hand gently on his daughter's head.

"What a patient child you are, Genevieve!" he said tenderly.

"Am I, father?" she replied, lifting a smiling face. "But it is so easy to be patient when one is happy."

"Then you are really happy? You do not yet regret?"

The girl hesitated a moment.

"One has regrets," she said. "It is not easy to leave a place one loves, and friends who have been always kind. But it has not been so hard as I thought it would be."

"You did dread it, then?"

"I dreaded some things, breaking up the home most of all. But it was soon over, and now I am glad; for the best is yet to be."

"Wait till after to-morrow before you say that."

"To-morrow! You are thinking of the journey over the moor? Ah! I shall love the moor as I love the sea. I am impatient for to-morrow."



Noel Bartholomew smiled, and caught back a short, quick sigh as he did so. Genevieve had inherited her temperamental cheerfulness, with other things, from her mother. He was thankful for it always, and he had never been more thankful than during the past few weeks of confusion, pain, perplexity, indecision.

Now and then his gratitude was mingled not a little with fear, with self-reproach. Was the child really as light-hearted as she seemed? Had she no life of her own that she should thus with such pliant gracefulness of spirit lend herself to the needs of another life? Were there no depths, no undercurrents of personal desire? Had her existence no aim in it as yet? Was it in truth the utterly impersonal thing it seemed to be?

He was glad that she should say so much as this. "One has regrets; it has not been easy." It seemed to reassure him. Had there been effort or tension underneath she would not have gone so near the cause of it. The small confession was valuable to him.

Save for the one great bereavement Genevieve had known but little of any of life's sterner sorrows. Her eighteen years of life

had been years of such steadfast-seeming good that until lately no ideas of any grave change had presented themselves. Nothing had been wanting. Love had been there, and friendship; the finer sort of intellectual people had come and gone across her path; art of every kind had taught her the canons of loveliness; music had stolen in upon the days with sweetness, and swept across the nights with power to soothe, to uplift. Yet is it strange to say that in all this there had been no full satisfaction? Is it incomprehensible to admit that while this fair life was passing it had not seemed to be the ideal life for which the soul of the girl was yearning?

It could not be said that she was dissatisfied; yet she was conscious of activities which she could neither deaden nor repress; conscious of want, of lowness, of human and spiritual narrowness. Others, looking on, seeing only the external, had judged that a life so manifestly unselfish must needs be ideal enough for any real woman; but the self-sacrificing are seldom the self-conscious, at any rate so far as the sacrifice is concerned.

## CHAPTER III.

THORNERDALE : THE FIRST PART OF AN  
OVERTURE.

“ Ah ! desolate hour when that shall be,  
When dew and sunlight, rain and wind,  
Shall seem but trivial things to thee,  
Unloved, unheeded, undivined.”

ALL Rippongill was astir by seven o'clock. It was a still, misty morning, and mild for October. The commonplace houses, the ugly chimneys had the same stately and architectural effect that they had had in the moonlight ; and the people who were moving about the streets seemed to vanish like sad ghosts into the white unknown distances.

“ I am sorry, very sorry,” said Mr. Bartholomew, joining his daughter, as she came out

from the inn, and stood in the steep little street. "You will see nothing, dear, if it keeps like this all day."

"Eh, but it never will, maister ; it'll niver keep on i' this gaait all t' daäy," said old Luke Acomb, the landlord of the Black Swan. The old man had an air of quite unusual importance in the eyes of the rustic group that had gathered about the archway that led to the inn yard. Was he not the host of these distinguished guests ? And did not every one know that he had volunteered to drive the carrier's waggon which was to convey them and their numerous belongings all the way from Rippongill to Murk-Marishes ? "They're *summat*," said a quick intellect in the crowd, "or else oäd Luke 'ud niver ha' crossed Langbarugh Moor wiv a heavy leaäde like yon at this time o' year."

"Ah's capped altogether," was the reply. "Did tha iver see a laädy like yon wiv all her white furs an' feathers ridin' iv a carrier's waggin ?"

"Can't saäy 'at iver Ah did. But what were they te deä ? If it hadn't ha' been Birkan Brigg cattle-fair there'd ha' been half-a-

dozen traps to get. As it is neäbody could get yan for neither love nor money."

This was quite true. Noel Bartholomew, thinking of his daughter, had declined the carrier's waggon unhesitatingly at first; but Genevieve had besought him to accept of it. What could be more delightful than the big, round-topped, picturesque vehicle? It would hold everything, shelter everything, and it offered chances of a perfectly new experience.

There was quite a leave-taking—thanks, smiles, sixpences, good wishes; then Genevieve and her father went up the street, old Luke shouting fussily that he would soon overtake them. They passed the church, the old-fashioned rectory, the few cottages that straggled along the lane. There were some dahlias and hollyhocks dripping in the mist, vague faces looked out from cottage-doors, wandering eyes watched the two strangers gliding swiftly away into the mystery beyond.

"Will they come back agaäin, mother?" asked a small speculative Yorkshireman. He was looking out between the divided trunk of a gnarled apple-tree.

“That’s mair nor Ah can tell tha, honey,” said the woman, feeling somehow as if the child’s question was of the nature of a foreboding. She stood some time straining her eyes in the effort to peer into the silver haze that was upon the hills. It showed no signs of lifting yet. It seemed to move on and on, unshrouding little by little a farmstead, a group of pensive cattle, a clump of fir-trees, a dark hill-top, then veiling them again hastily in white mist, in still silence.

“It is as if one had to be silent to be in keeping with things,” said Mr. Bartholomew in his quiet, emphatic way. He was awaking to the fact of his own taciturnity.

“But you do not dislike it, father? It is not depressing?”

“Depressing!—no, except in the sense that most beautiful things are depressing. You remember Keats:—

‘Ay, in the very temple of Delight  
Veil’d Melancholy has her sovran shrine.’”

Genevieve paused awhile—a long while it seemed as they walked on side by side.

“It is strange,” the girl said at last,

“how the two things, sadness and loveliness, appeared twined together, so to speak; and there is such a weight of testimony that it is so. You quoted Keats just now. I thought of Shakespeare making Jessica say, ‘I am never merry when I hear sweet music;’ of Shelley’s beautiful line, ‘Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought;’ of Milton’s *Penseroso*. I suppose if we had been at home among the books we could have found a hundred such indorsements.”

“Yes; that reminds me again to be glad that we brought so many books. I thought of them in the night, and I was glad for your sake. Every volume seemed a mitigation of my cruelty.”

“Of your cruelty to me; but what of old Luke’s horses?”

“I think I hear them behind us.”

“Panting along under Homer and Plato, Shakespeare and Milton, Shelley and Keats, Ruskin and Carlyle; under poets, historians, essayists; under novels from Scott’s first to Mrs. Oliphant’s last; under all these books and countless others, and my father is afraid that he will see his daughter fading away

from the face of the earth for very weariness, for very disgust of a life unoccupied, unencouraged, unsolaced."

"Your father fears nothing of the kind, and his daughter knows it."

"But he does fear?"

"Which is only natural."

"Seeing that he is not an unnatural father. But, oh! he is tiresome at times."

Conversation was becoming difficult. Old Luke Acomb was gaining upon them with the lumbering waggon, and the pair of stout well-fed horses. As he came up he stopped.

"Noo! Ya'll be gittin' in a bit? T' young laädy steps oot bravely, but she'll be tired by noo, Ah reckon. We're three miles fra' t' Black Swan."

"And we have nearly twenty to travel yet," said Mr. Bartholomew. "What do you say, Genevieve? Will you get in? I know you are impatient for the new experience."

"So I am," admitted the girl; "and it looks enchanting inside the waggon. But not yet, not yet," she said with a smile and a little wave of her hand to old Luke as she turned away. "The rapture of rest is in



exact proportion to the intensity of weariness. I wish to be weary."

"Your wish is likely to be gratified," said Mr. Bartholomew.

"Before we reach Murk-Marishes? Yes; I suppose so. That thought alone will prevent me from dissipating my resources to too great an extent. I have no wish to arrive at the Haggs in a defenceless condition."

"Defenceless?"

"That was the word I used. I meant a state of not being able to defend myself."

"From whom?" asked Mr. Bartholomew.

"From Miss Craven."

"You are going to be afraid of her?"

"I think so. I may even say that I have a presentiment that it will be so."

"And that presentiment arises out of descriptions given by me?"

"Entirely out of your graphic descriptions."

"Tell me what you see in that curious imagination of yours?" said Mr. Bartholomew, after a brief wondering pause.

"I will. . . . To begin with I see a York-shirewoman?"

"You will find that that epithet is less descriptive than it may seem."

"But there is such a thing as a typical Yorkshirewoman."

"Yes; a thing that is to be found more frequently on the stage and in third-rate novels than in any of the three Ridings of Yorkshire."

"Still it exists? For me it is to be personified by Miss Craven. I see her distinctly. She is a middle-aged woman, tall, large, angular. Her hair, which you describe as being black twenty years ago, is iron-grey now, very smooth and straight; and her dark eyes look hard; in fact, her whole expression is one of hardness, keenness, and shrewdness; and the corners of her mouth are not quite free from the suspicion of sarcasm. She carries herself well for a woman who has done the greater part of the work of a farmhouse for about thirty years; and there is a certain dignity about her, a something not to be trifled with. She will speak the dialect, and her speech will be as curt as her manner. . . . Again I say that I wish to arrive at Murk-Marishes not too much exhausted to be able to hold my own."

Bartholomew smiled—his smile looked graver than it was, his mouth being concealed by a somewhat heavy and inelegant moustache.

“That is not ill done, dear,” he said. “Keep it in mind; you will have both time and opportunity for comparison of the real with the ideal. . . . Meanwhile, you observe that the mist is rising?”

The scene was changing with rapidity. They had reached the top of the long winding lane that led down into Thornerdale. The broad valley was at their feet, filled with soft bright haze, which a light breeze was sweeping upward and onward, confusing, mingling all things. Now and then, by moments at a time, the sun struggled through, throwing silvery lances across the vale, disclosing vague colours, indefinite forms. Here and there points of the tall dark upland stood out, first on one side, then on the other, now near at hand, and now far away in the great blue-white distance. The transitions were rapid, bewildering. You could not overtake a complete picture.

Noel Bartholomew and his daughter stood

awhile on the brow of the hill. There were a few houses scattered about, bright-eyed children came running up the road; a tiny inn stood by the wayside among the crimson and orange blackberry leaves. When old Luke came up his horses stopped quite naturally—they stopped quite naturally many times that day; but they were not taken out of the waggon till they got to Thorner Head, which was twelve long miles from the Black Swan at Rippongill.

Passing through Thornerdale, Genevieve at last made practical acquaintance with the interior of a carrier's waggon. It was less enchanting than it had promised to be. She was slow to confess her disappointment, but confession had to be made. The jolting was terrible, the strange stuffiness more terrible still. It was not endurable for more than a quarter of an hour at a time, not unless she sat on the edge of the waggon beside old Luke, where the breeze could blow upon her face. This she professed to enjoy with enthusiasm.

Beyond doubt it was an enjoyable thing to pass through Thornerdale on a perfect

autumn day. As the morning wore the sun began to pour down brilliantly, glittering on village steeples, lighting up busy farmsteads, gilding the refined gold of beech and maple, painting the flowers that grew in the cottage gardens, sparkling in the stony little becks that ran rippling and foaming along. Black-birds flew chuckling across the pathway ; thrushes sang their autumn songs among the leaves that were fluttering down. It was strangely stimulating. Genevieve did not fail to notice the keen living light that had come into her father's eyes. The comprehension of the present moment was in them, and an intentness that was like a promise for the future.

So far it had not been a silent journey. Old Luke seemed to be explaining or relating something all through the dale. At village inns, at garden gates, by farmyard walls, he had himself to explain, his presence there, the intentions of his fellow-travellers, so far as he knew them. Hardly a wayfaring man passed by unquestioned, uninformed. The old man did not appear to be noting how fast the day was going.

## CHAPTER IV.

### LANGBARUGH MOOR : THE SECOND PART OF AN OVERTURE.

“ This young brilliant Ayesha was one day questioning him, ‘ Now am not I better than Kadijah ? She was a widow, old, and had lost her looks ; you love me better than you love her ? ’ ‘ No, by Allah ! ’ answered Mahomet ; ‘ No, by Allah ! She believed in me when none else would believe. ’ ”

AFTER an hour of rest and refreshment at Thorner Head, it was observable that old Luke was less communicative ; it might be that there was less to be communicated. The bare rugged hillside was not suggestive of local or personal narrative.

Genevieve and her father were walking up the hill, over a stony pathway with fading bracken and dark whin on either hand,

There was only the hill-top before them, always the hill-top with its outline of gaunt furze bushes against the sky. They lingered a little to let the waggon pass well in front ; then they turned and looked backward down the dale.

“ The overture is in two parts,” said Noel Bartholomew. “ The first part is ended ; the second has begun.”

“ As a rule I enjoy overtures,” said Genevieve. “ I have enjoyed this so far. It was beautiful ; it was new, and despite its variety it had that highest of all excellences—unity of effect. I shall not forget Thornerdale.”

“ And I can answer for it that you will not forget Langbarugh Moor.”

“ Probably not, since I have never seen a real moor.”

“ You do not expect to see the heather in bloom ? ”

“ No ; the bloom is past, I know. I shall be watching daily for its appearance about the beginning of next August.”

“ You can contemplate that ? ”

“ As one contemplates dawn after sleepless nights.”

"I did not know that you had been so restless!"

"Restless! no; but London is never quiet. How should it be with its three or four millions of unquiet souls? To live in the midst of them, or but just outside of them, is to think, to wonder, to be anxious, to run the risk of being faithless. Here, between the purple heather and one's self there will be nothing—nothing but God's pure air."

"Then you are anticipating peace, freedom from anxiety, deliverance from the pressure of modern ideas?"

"These exactly. Not the sleepest of the lotus-eaters craved more eagerly for 'dreamful ease' than I do now."

"The craving came on as you passed through Thornerdale?"

"About midway through the dale."

"It was born of the sunshine, the lowing of cattle, the pine-trees, the purple hills, the crisping ripples, the downward streams over which the long-leaved flowers droop and weep?"

"Certainly Tennyson is wonderful."

All this while the two were walking up-



ward. The sun had gone suddenly behind a bank of sullen grey. There was a chill in the air. The furzy hill-top looked black against the sombre sky.

"What is there when one arrives at the top of this hill?" asked Genevieve, after walking upward for half an hour in silence.

"Another hill-top."

"And after that?"

"Another."

The bank of grey cloud was drifting rapidly all over the sky now; the withered bracken, amber and lilac, crimson and ivory-white, vivid green and warm russet brown, was beginning to bend quiveringly to the breeze that swept with increasing force across the moor. The great stretches of dead heather shuddered in masses; the tiny yellow leaves flew sadly away from the sloethorn; the black-faced moorland sheep were moving restlessly from hillock to hillock, and showed a tendency to congregate. It was fully evident that bad weather was approaching.

"It is only a question of time," said Mr. Bartholomew, looking at his daughter with apprehension. "We shall find old Luke at

the next inn. He will probably know something of what we have to expect."

The small stone hut known as the Moor Edge Inn, and which Genevieve did not care to enter, stood on the top of the last rise in the ascent of the slope of Langbarugh Moor. The great wild waste itself lay beyond. There was nothing to burst upon the sight. Slowly, and with a sense of oppressiveness, you became aware that you stood looking out over an apparently boundless desolation. The purple-black barrenness stretched like a gloomy sea from the one horizon to the other. The grey, flying scud seemed as if it touched the dark distance. A few weather-blanced boulders rested here and there among the dead, brown masses of ling and furze; the road stretched away, white and winding, till it was lost in the rugged curves. A flight of crows passed with sinuous movement and hoarse, derisive, mocking notes.

"Noo; this disn't leuk varry promisin'," said old Luke, coming out from the warm turf fire with evident reluctance. "Ya'll ha' te bide insahde o' t' waggin', Ah reckon."

"You think we are going to have a

storm?" asked Mr. Bartholomew. Genevieve detected a loss of buoyancy in his tone as he spoke.

"Whya, we sall hev a sup o' raäin, an' a bit o' wind, but there'll be nowt to hurt onybody."

This ought to have been reassuring; but it had become quite evident by this time that the journey would not be accomplished by daylight. To be out on Langbarugh Moor on a dark stormy night was something Noel Bartholomew had not prepared for. It was not that he had any fears for himself, or even for his daughter—she could be sheltered, and he was capable of physical endurance if the need came. A certain amount of real hardship, of real danger would probably have awakened within him the qualities necessary for meeting such adventures. But the present event fell short of adventure. It was simply disappointing, depressing. Genevieve saw the mood coming over him. He had said nothing, but she knew the meaning of the patient, compressed setting of the muscles about his mouth, the significance of the composed tranquil weariness that was coming

into his eyes. It was not of the present moment he was thinking as they stood there, waiting for the old man to complete his preparations for the worst. A wild gust of wind was sweeping up the moor, the canvas cover of the waggon was cracking and flapping. Presently Genevieve's hat went flying into the angle of a peat-stack.

"Ah, this is terrible," said Mr. Bartholomew with concern. "This is terrible. You will certainly take cold, you will certainly be ill. I think I must have been mad to bring you such a journey in such a manner as this."

Genevieve had rescued her hat, and was putting it on again. She was smiling, her face was flushed under the veil of golden hair that the wind was tossing into such beautiful disorder. When its rebelliousness was subdued a little, she laid her hand on her father's arm, drawing him into the shelter of the cottage gable.

"Is it of me that you have been thinking while you were so silent?" she asked with a tender earnestness.

"Yes, partly. Until within the last hour I think I have never seen my senseless plans

in all their utter senselessness. If going back were possible at this moment, I think I would go back; I should at least spare myself the misery of knowing that having wasted my own life I must now needs waste another."

"You have wasted your life! You—Noel Irving Bartholomew! That would be new to the admirers of the 'Flight of Saint Barbara,' of the 'Jeanne D'Arc,' of the 'Flinging of Excalibur,' of a dozen other noted pictures that I could name in a breath. Wasted your life! You have its best yet to live, so far as the world and your work goes.

'You and your pictures linked  
With love about, and praise, till life shall end.'

If you never paint another picture, no man can say that yours was a wasted life. But you will paint. All day I have felt it, all day I have been glad of every mile, because it was another mile between you and the carping, doubting, ignorant *dilettanti*, who were enough to paralyze a Michael Angelo. You know it was so; you know that for ten years past you have craved for seclusion, for

something as near to solitude as you might have. And now it is here, a vast and splendid solitude, instinct with possibilities. . . . Say that you are glad, my father!"

More than once a strange quick light had quivered under the man's eyelids as an old thought, an old pride, an old hope struck him with fresh force as it came from the young girl's lips.

"I am glad, my child, if for nothing else then, I am glad that you are my child, my inspiration."

"No, not that; but I can stay with you when the inspiration does not." Then her voice changed, and she said lightly, "But you are aware that I have impulses of my own sometimes; and just now I am impelled to suggest that we should arrange ourselves among the rugs in front of the waggon. Come! We have Leah's cakes to eat, and here are the cups of hot tea."

They were soon off again; out on the top of the treeless, wind-swept waste, known as Langbarugh Moor. Old Luke had awakened at last to the fact that the day was really done, and that a rough night was at hand.

No conversation was possible as the lumbering waggon went jolting, swaying, swinging from side to side among the rough stones of the moorland road. It was growing darker and darker; the wind was growing stronger and colder. At times there was a rift in the flying blackness of the heavens, disclosing lines of cold steely light. That was all they saw of the sunset. The rest was darkness, wildness, weariness; a sense of a vast desolate, sterile world.

When the rain came down it came with fury, beating in passionate gusts on the canvas cover of the waggon, dropping in streamlets over the front on to the poor old driver, who strove to cheer on his horses with all the energy that was left to him. He had lighted a big horn lantern, and it swung from the top of the waggon, throwing fitful gleams of light here and there upon the wet horses, upon the dripping reins, upon old Luke's watch as he looked at it silently from time to time. Outside in the visible darkness it seemed as if strange forms were passing; now a wan silent face, and now a street of a silent dream-like city.

So the hours went by. One by one the miles were overpassed. The rain ceased, began again; the wind went on wuthering\* wildly, sobbing, raging, plaining over the barren moor that was so indisputably its own domain.

At last the waggon made a sharp turn.

"There!" the old man shouted. "We're goin' doon t' Ravengates noo. We'll be at t' Haggs by nine o'clock."

"Is it moor all the way?" asked Genevieve, lifting her tired head, and trying to speak so that she should not seem tired at all.

"Yes, dear, Hungarth Haggs is the first house we come to when the edge of the moor is passed."

The girl's head did not droop again. "At that house there will be rest," she said to herself, "and there will be light and warmth, shelter, and refuge from the storm. . . . So ends the overture."

\* Wuthering, an expressive Yorkshire term for the sound of the wind on the heights.



## CHAPTER V.

MISS CRAVEN.

“Good, my lords,  
I am not prone to weeping, as our sex  
Commonly are; the want of which vain dew,  
Perchance, shall dry your pities; but I have  
That honourable grief lodged here, which burns  
Worse than tears drown.”

*The Winter's Tale.*

“DEFENCE, not defiance,” whispered Genevieve, as her father lifted her down from the shaft of the waggon.

“You are equal to defence?”

“Perfectly.”

The rain was pouring in torrents; old Luke was shouting to the man who had come out from the farmyard to help him; the two sheep dogs were barking; a candle was coming along the passage to the open door.

"Come in!" said a voice in tones that were hard and unabashed. "We've been expectin' ya this five hours."

It was Miss Craven, and as Genevieve had anticipated, she spoke the dialect, and she spoke it curtly; but the form of it was modified so that no impression of coarseness or ignorance was given.

Mr. Bartholomew had some directions to give to the two men, and Genevieve followed Miss Craven along a narrow dim passage with several turnings and windings in it. There was a cheery fire of peat and pine-wood burning in the parlour. The table was spread, not bounteously perhaps, but with a tempting perfection of neatness and niceness.

"I am sorry we are so late," said Genevieve, as Miss Craven turned to light the lamp without further welcome or greeting. "We have been longer on the journey than we expected to be."

"If you'd known as much o' Luke Acomb as I know you might mebbe ha' thought 'at you'd done well to get here at all," rejoined Miss Craven, carefully adjusting the chimney

of the lamp as she spoke. This done, she lifted her keen dark eyes to Genevieve's face for the first time. Her look was quite inscrutable. It was impossible to say what impression she was receiving. After an unflinching moment or two, Genevieve's eyelids dropped a little, and a pink flush came over her face, increasing its extreme loveliness. "So you're Noel Bartholomew's daughter?" said Miss Craven, in tones that were as little to be understood by a stranger as was the expression of her countenance.

"Yes," Genevieve said with a smile. "I dare say I am a surprise to you. You would not expect to see me so—so much grown up?"

"Miss Craven shall tell you how much surprised she feels to-morrow, dear," said Mr. Bartholomew, coming into the room and offering his hand to Miss Craven's unresponsive touch. "How are you?" he asked, "and your father and mother, how are they?"

"They're much as usual."

"And you think it is not worth while to answer my inquiry about yourself? That

is true. And I have so many inquiries to make. But we will have some tea first, please. Genevieve, this used to be my favourite armchair. Let me see how you look in it?" The girl sank into the chair with unmistakable weariness as Miss Craven disappeared to fetch the tea. "Let me take your hat off, dear," said her father, raising her head gently; then he unfastened her cloak. She had a pale red dress underneath, a soft warm-coloured clinging cashmere, with creamy lace about the throat and wrists.

"I feel too stupid to care for a little disorder to-night," she said, giving a tired glance at herself.

"But disorder is the order of the day. You are not going to forget London ways so soon?"

"No; I am going to forget nothing. I am going to add to my store of memories. By the way, I like this room. I wish we were going to stay here."

Fortunately for Genevieve this last remark was overheard by Miss Craven, who was entering the room with tea, toast, warm cake, ham and eggs. She was proud of the old

parlour. There were samplers hanging on the painted panels; rosettes of satin ribbon, white and green and blue, each with a ticket to it, framed and glazed and hanging over the fireplace. These, Genevieve learnt later, were evidences that once upon a time prize cattle had been reared at Hunsgarth Haggs. Poor old Craven had been as proud of them as a soldier of his Victoria Cross, or a curate of his silver tea-pot. Not the best picture that ever was painted could have given half the satisfaction that these scraps of satin ribbon had given.

A few of Mr. Bartholomew's sketches of twenty years ago hung on either side; but the general opinion of the neighbourhood had gone so decidedly against them, that even Miss Craven hardly cared to have them hanging there. They were water-colours, little ethereal impressions of mist, light, colour, and unusual effects of dawn or sunset, such effects as blot out all details and even actual form. Miss Craven had had her own ideas concerning these, and her ideas had been confirmed by her neighbours, so that it was hardly to be wondered at that she should

have no very exalted views of Mr. Bartholomew's powers as an artist. Indeed it may be doubted whether she had exalted views of any artist or of any art, and she had long ago given it as her opinion that "of all lazy ways o' gettin' a livin' paintin' picturs was about the laziest."

"And now," said Mr. Bartholomew, the edge of his appetite being dulled a little, "and now tell me, Miss Craven, what important changes have taken place in the neighbourhood of Murk-Marishes during all these years? I know nothing; and I am impatient to know."

Somewhat to Genevieve's surprise, Dorothy had placed herself at the head of the table without invitation. Miss Craven's idea of having "lodgers" differed materially from Miss Bartholomew's views on the same subject. Genevieve was by no means sorry, she liked it on the whole; and Miss Craven was attentive, if not urbane. Moreover she looked in keeping with the room, with the general atmosphere of things, as she sat there. She wore no cap, her dark hair was still dark, Genevieve's prediction notwith-

standing, and she had a fine open-air colour on her cheek. She seemed to typify the northern autumn in the bright keen austerity of her appearance and manner.

Miss Craven did not reply at once to Mr. Bartholomew's request for information. She seemed to be considering the matter.

"It's over twenty years since you left Murk-Marishes, isn't it?" she inquired, handing him another cup of tea.

"Yes; a month or two over."

"And you asked what important changes there'd been?"

"I think I did."

"Well, then, so far as I can recollect there hasn't a single thing happened important enough to mention."

"Happy place!"

"I've said myself 'at it were like a better place; for there's neither marryin' nor givin' i' marriage; an' the folks don't die."

"What should you say to staying here altogether, Genevieve dear?" asked Mr. Bartholomew, turning to his daughter.

"I say that it sounds tempting."

"I should like to hear you say the truth

about it six months after this," said Dorothy, giving Miss Bartholomew one of her sharp, half-scornful glances.

"I will promise if you like," replied Genevieve; "my father will answer for my unreserve."

"So I will, dear, at the same time recommending caution. For real passionate caring for one's own little *pied à terre* commend me to a Yorkshire man or woman. But really, Miss Craven, has the world about Murk-Marishes stood as still as you seem to think it has? What of your neighbours, the Broughs of Hawklands?"

"They are at Hawklands yet."

"And the Langthwaites of Lowmoor Cross?"

"Are at Lowmoor Cross still."

"Are you disposed to admit that any of these people are older?"

"Yes; they are all twenty years older. Some of them look it, and some of them don't. For the most part you will find they don't."

"That I can readily believe," said Mr. Bartholomew, knowing that he need not



trouble himself to make the compliment too obvious.

There was a pause, and it seemed to Miss Craven that the next inquiry was made with effort. Perhaps she looked for some.

"And the Richmonds of Yarrell Croft; of course they are at Yarrell Croft still? Though I think I remember hearing a few years ago that Miss Richmond was married."

"I don't reckon Yarrell Croft to be i' the Murk-Marishes township," said Dorothy with an extra touch of asperity, which might perhaps be accounted for by the fact that the Hunsgarth Haggs Farm belonged to the Richmonds. "Yarrell Croft lies across t' beck, an' there's been changes anuff there; but *that* change wasn't one o' them. Miss Richmond's Miss Richmond yet, an' likely to be if all be true 'at folks say of her temper."

"But the other changes you spoke of?" said Mr. Bartholomew, not apparently wishing to discuss Miss Richmond's failings.

"I meant old Mr. Richmond's death," said Miss Craven, watching her interlocutor more carefully than before. "He died three

or four years back quite sudden ; an' his wife only lived a fortnight after."

"Then is there no one but Miss Richmond at Yarrell now?"

"Miss Richmond an' her brother, Mr. Cecil. There was a little boy, you remember?"

"Ah, yes; I do remember now. He was a shy, delicate, fretful little fellow. I used to think that he wouldn't live."

"He has lived; it's about three years since he came of age."

"And he and his sister live alone at Yarrell Croft? It must be a little dull for him, I should say. How does he spend his time?"

"Shootin' sparrows with a saloon pistol," said Miss Craven with one of her most satirical smiles.

"I never thought to hear that said of a Yorkshire gentleman," interposed Genevieve, whose interest in the conversation was not to be measured by the number of her interruptions.

"You'll not hear it twice in your lifetime," replied Miss Craven.

"And what of Usselby Hall?" asked Mr. Bartholomew presently. "I forget the owner's name. I believe he was a mere boy. He was on the Continent all the time I was down here."

"Mr. Kirkoswald? He's mostly on the Continent. It was him that was engaged to Miss Richmond. Nobody ever knew exactly how it happened that the engagement came to nothing; but it did come to nothing. An' he went abroad again, an' he's been abroad ever since. Once or twice he's come home unexpectedly, an' stopped a week or so; but it seems as if he couldn't settle. He's allus off again directly."

"And Mr. Crudas? I must not forget him," said Mr. Bartholomew, occupying himself intently with the pattern of his teacup.

The slow hot flush that swept over Miss Craven's face, mounting to the very roots of her hair, was evidently a flush of pain.

"I know nothing of Ishmael Crudas," she said curtly, "an' I don't want to know. I reckon you'd find him at Swarthcliff Top if you wanted him."

"I forget if there is any one else," Mr.

Bartholomew went on musingly, as if he were merely speaking to give Miss Craven time to recover herself. "Canon Gabriel is living still, I am thankful to say. I had a letter from him only last week. I think I have some dread of meeting him. He looked so worn, so frail twenty years ago."

"You needn't have much dread," said Miss Craven with less asperity of tone. "I saw him when I was over at Thurkeld Abbas last week, an' he looked exactly as he's looked ever since he came into this neighbourhood. He's got a new curate lately, a Mr. Severne. He's not much of a preacher. They were saying doon at t' Marishes o' Sunday 'at this was his first place; an' t' Canon had got him cheap."

Mr. Bartholomew glanced at his daughter, and the quiet amusement in his glance met with a response, but it was such a very sleepy response that Miss Craven was requested to show her to her room without further delay. Miss Craven was not sorry to do so. "I'm allus i' bed two hours afore this time," she said, leading the way to a long low room hung with blue and white linen in large

staring checks. There was a mingled odour of apples and clean linen ; the yellow walls were decorated with framed funeral cards ; the tiny mantel-shelf, the top of the drawers, the one little table, were covered with exquisite old china. Weary as Genevieve was she could not help expressing her admiration of the dainty egg-shell cups and saucers, the odd-shaped tea-pots on stands to match, the curious dishes, the various punch-bowls. " I shall fancy myself among the art treasures at South Kensington when I awake in the morning," the girl said delightedly.

Dorothy lingered a little, mollified, but undecided ; then uttering an abrupt " Good night " she went away. For days past she had been nourishing something that was half an aversion, half a dream, of the London fine lady who was to enter her house, live in her rooms, be waited upon by her own hands,—for Miss Craven had kept no woman-servant for years past. She was fighting a braver battle than the world knew, fighting with bad harvests, poor land, exhausted capital, abounding game, and a hard, indifferent landlord. Her father's advice was of no use

to her now. Ten years before, the loss of a splendid flock of moorland sheep—over two hundred of them—in a heavy snowstorm, had unstrung the old man's brain for ever. And now his wife's memory was failing, so that in addition to all other labours and sorrows Dorothy had two helpless old people to tend and care for, and ceaselessly watch; and the service was not offered by measure, nor untenderly.

Of these and other troubles Genevieve knew nothing as yet. She only saw that there was something about Miss Craven not to be understood all at once; and she had already a strong impression that it was something she ought to desire to understand. "I think she is enduring some trial—enduring secretly," the girl said to herself, as she lay listening in the dark to the rain that was on the roof, and the fitful wuthering of the night wind. All else about the farm was hushed and still.

## CHAPTER VI.

## LAST YEAR'S SNOW.

"O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!  
Keep me in temper : I would not be mad."

*King Lear.*

THE fold-yard being at the back of the house, Genevieve slept on past cock-crow, past milking-time, past the noisy feeding-time of calves and fowls, past the shouting and confusion of old Luke Acomb's departure. When she awoke the sun was shining, gleaming brightly over field and farm, over hill and dale, and ah!—was it possible?—over a distance of wide, cloudless, dark blue sea!

"This, then, was one of your surprises, my father!" she exclaimed, gliding down the little garden path to the gate where Mr. Bartholomew stood. The scent of southern-

wood and mint and pennyroyal was in the air; gossamer-threads all hung with diamonds stretched across the one rose-bush and the fuchsia-tree; a last pansy held up its head over the creeping stonecrop.

“You forgive me, then?”

“For keeping the secret? Yes, indeed. I thought we were miles and miles from the sea. Think of it—of having both sea and moor, and nothing but these green hills and hollows dropping downward between!”

“What distance should you say these hills and hollows represent?” asked Mr. Bartholomew, speaking in the slow, impressive tones which he used even when there was nothing to be impressed.

“Two miles?” ventured Genevieve.

“Probably three, as the crow flies, and certainly four or five by the high road.”

“So much? But I see; there is more between us and the edge of the cliff than one takes in at a glance. There is a village to the left.”

“This one, almost at our feet? It is Murk-Marishes—the hamlet of Murk-Marishes—the parish seems to extend indefinitely on



this side. A mile or two beyond—over that sedgy flat—you see a large village; that is Thurkeld Abbas. They speak of it as ‘the town.’ You will have to do your shopping there.”

“Delightful! We will go and buy something to-day—something that will be useful for the cottage. . . . Can we see the cottage from here?”

Mr. Bartholomew turned to the northward. “I can see the chimneys and the top of the thatched gable,” he said. “They are there, on the slope of the hill, about half-way between here and Murk-Marishes. That tree hides the cottage. It used to be rather a picturesque little place. We will go and see it as soon after breakfast as you like.”

Miss Craven did not preside at the breakfast-table. “She had had her breakfast four hours ago,” she said with a smile that was not altogether one of amusement. “Besides, it is churning-day,” she added, as if to account for her broad white apron, and her lilac print bonnet. She had taken in at a glance Genevieve’s soft creamy-grey dress, with all its details of finish and style. “To think o’

coming downstairs in a gown like that first thing of a morning!" she said to herself as she went back to the dairy. "She does look a helpless, useless sort o' thing, with her yellow hair, an' her finery, an' her white hands; she's fit for nothing but a wax-work show! I wonder how many picters he'll ha' te paint te keep her i' clothes for a twelve-month?"

Dorothy Craven was not musing idly; the churn was flying round at the rate of fifty turns a minute, and she was listening carefully all the while to the sound it made. The butter was beginning to come; the butter-milk had to be let off every few minutes now; it was always passed carefully through a hair sieve, and the crumbs of butter returned to the churn.. Dorothy was proud of her butter; proud, too, of the cool, sweet dairy, with its shining pans and its white, scoured wood-work. Consequently she felt no annoyance when she saw Genevieve standing somewhat timidly near the door.

"May I come in, Miss Craven?" she asked in her gentlest tone. "I have never seen a dairy. And my father wishes to know if

you will be too busy to go with us to Netherbank to see the cottage to-day."

"You can go with yerselves," answered Dorothy without looking up; she was replacing the peg in the churn.

"We can; but we should like it better if you will come with us. You can explain things, and advise us. I am hoping that you will be kind enough to tell me and teach me a great deal."

Dorothy ignored the hope; she was thinking of her own reasons for wishing to go down to the cottage, wondering how she could manage it.

"I couldn't go till I have got the butter made up," she said. "An' then there's other things."

"Can I help you in any way? . . . Let me try," said Genevieve, a little roused by Miss Craven's glance and smile. "At least, I can remove our breakfast things, if you will let me go into the kitchen."

"You can go anywhere you like," said Dorothy, half disdainfully, as she began churning again at least as vigorously as before. When she stopped again she could

hear voices in the kitchen. Her father was talking, Genevieve was answering, old Mrs. Craven was dropping murmurs of confirmation; she had got up to make a little curtsy when Genevieve went in, and her husband had touched his thin white locks, smiling, wondering, apparently half amazed.

“Eh, but it’s a bonny feäce!” he said in tones of childish delight. “An’ it’s bonny gold hair, an’ a bonny goon! . . . Isn’t it a bonny feäce, Barbara?” Then, suddenly his tone changed, and his face seemed to change too. “You mustn’t goä out o’ doors wi’ that goon on, honey, nut te-day. It’s goin’ te snaw. It allus snaws on Langbarugh Moor. Don’t goä oot o’ doors te-day, honey.”

“You’ll frighten t’ young laädy, Joseph,” said poor Mrs. Craven in meek tones. She was knitting a grey stocking; she had sat there in the wide chimney corner knitting grey stockings for years past now. It was a cosy and quiet nook for the two old people. A turf fire smouldered on the large hearth-stone; a kettle swung from the crook; there was an old oak dresser opposite, on which were ranged the shining brass and copper

pans, the pewter dishes, the old willow-patterned plates. The things seemed to speak, to tell of prosperous days, of substance, of success. Other things whispered contradiction. Were the whispers growing louder as the days went by?

Genevieve went in and out; little by little old Craven told his piteous tale of the sudden snow-storm, the loss of the ewes, and the unyeaned lambs. It was not the money loss he spoke of now—that had passed out of his mind—it was the suffering of the dumb surprised creatures, the cruelty of the driving snow, the treacherousness of the hollows of Langbarugh Moor.

“Ya’ll nut goä oot, honey—ya’ll not goä on te t’ moor te daäy,” he went on pleading. “It’s sure te snaw afore neet. T’ snaw’s allus driftin’ ower Langbarugh Moor.”

It was almost noon when Genevieve, Miss Craven, and Mr. Bartholomew set out to inspect the cottage. Dorothy had given Genevieve a moment’s surprise when she came downstairs dressed for the little expedition. Her silver-grey alpaca dress—she called it a lustre; her black silk mantle, her

small grey straw bonnet relieved with pink ribbons had wrought quite a transformation. If Genevieve had dared, she would have said, "How young you look! and how pretty!" It was evident that Miss Craven knew not only what to wear, but how to wear the things she had. None of these were of yesterday. Many a summer Sunday evening had seen them carefully folded away; but to the last they would have the virtues of fitness and conscientiousness.

Old Joseph came out to the door as they were starting.

"You're goin' oot o' doors then, honey?" he said to Genevieve, who stopped to listen with a sad smile. "You're bent o' goin' then, but be quick back again. It's goin' te snaw. Night an' day t' snaw's driftin' ower Langbarugh Moor."

Dorothy was moving away, but not impatiently. She was a little anxious this morning. She was to be Mr. Bartholomew's landlady, if he decided to take the cottage. It had been let on lease with the farm for generations. Lately, since it had stood empty so much, Miss Craven had tried to get rid of

it; but Miss Richmond would not hear of change. It was always Miss Richmond's name that the agent, Mr. Damer, used; never Mr. Richmond's; so that the people of the neighbourhood had no clear idea of the real ownership of the various portions of the Yarrell Croft estate.

Mr. Bartholomew remembered that a doctor's widow had lived in the cottage twenty years ago. After that a cartwright had taken it; who had built himself a workshop in the orchard; and after his departure it had stood empty so long that Miss Craven, half-despairing of letting it in any other way, had furnished it to suit an eccentric old man, who had offered to pay a somewhat liberal rent for a furnished cottage, providing it was a mile away from any other human dwelling.

The cottage at Netherbank was barely half a mile from Hunsgarth Haggs, and but very little farther from Murk-Marishes. Still, it stood alone, and was quiet enough to please even the eccentric stranger. Unfortunately, however, for Miss Craven, he did not remain more than a couple of years—not long enough to cover the outlay he had caused her to

make; and the idea of any one else ever requiring a furnished cottage at Netherbank had been considered rather in the light of a joke in the neighbourhood of Murk-Marishes. Dorothy knew well that the coming of the Bartholomews was an unexpectedly favourable turn of fortune's wheel.

It was a steep and rugged road that led downward from the Haggs. There were low rude stone walls on either hand; patches of golden ragwort grew by the wayside, dense bramble-brakes were spreading everywhere; the amber and vermilion leaves throwing into relief the great clusters of ripe purple-black fruit. Now and then a spray flung itself aloft, waving in the sunshine against the far distance of dark-blue sea and sky.

"I wish I could bring a hundred little gutter children from the London slums to this hillside to-day," Genevieve said, as they came to a sharp turn in the road—the ripe brambles seemed to cluster more thickly than ever in the sheltered corner by the wall. "It seems such a pity," she continued, "that the blackberries should wither here un-gathered when there are so many little fingers



that have never gathered one, so many little lips that have never been stained by one. . . . Wait till my ship comes into port. There shall be a feast-day!"

A minute later her eye rested on the thatched cottage that was to be her home. No cloud-shadow was upon it; there was no sudden chill in the air. A flight of white pigeons were just settling upon the roof.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A SCENE OF PROBATION.

"I foresee, and I could foretell  
Thy future portion, sure and well—  
But those passionate eyes speak true, speak true,  
And let them say what thou shalt do."

R. BROWNING, *The Flight of the Duchess*.

"A COTTAGE in a corn-field and a picturesque stile where the gate should be!" exclaimed Genevieve in pleased surprise.

"I shouldn't ha' thought 'at you'd ha' known 'at stubble meant corn," said Miss Craven, with the touch of disdain which she seemed to have adopted for special use when she spoke to Genevieve. "As for the stile, it's the awk'ardest stile i' the district. I've asked Mr. Damer to put a gate up till I'm tired o' askin' him."

Certainly the stile was an awkward one, and the path through the field was narrow; midway it turned at a sharp angle in the direction of the cottage. Just at the turn, a great covey of partridges started outwards with a sudden burst, and went whirring and fluttering up the stubble to the wide furzy pasture that skirted the moor.

"Will one be liable to that kind of thing?" asked Genevieve, with a little pretence of being startled.

"Eminently liable," said Mr. Bartholomew. "If you think it will be a drawback to residence at Netherbank you must speak before it is too late."

"I will resign myself to the partridges," replied Genevieve, coming to a standstill in front of the cottage. Certainly it was as rude and quaint a little place as you could see. The heavy ling thatch hung low over window and wall; the broad chimney of undressed stone was built outside, and stood like a tall buttress picturesquely designed for the thatch to lean against and the winding ivy to cling to; the purple-brown boughs of the fading ash-tree dropped upon the roof; creepers

hung fading and yellowing about the deep recesses of the windows. The garden, a tiny unfenced patch of ground between the cottage and the stubble-field, displayed a fine crop of the crimson spires of the dock sorrel; sweet-herbs crept about in tangled masses; a solitary pale pink hollyhock grew at the foot of the rough stone steps that led up to the cottage door.

"What do you think so far?" asked Mr. Bartholomew a little anxiously; all the morning he had been more or less anxious.

"So far I think it is charming," Genevieve answered with enthusiasm. "Perhaps it is even too charming, since it is not in the nature of things to be consistent."

"Well, that's just what I'm frightened of," said Miss Craven, unlocking the door. It opened straight into the kitchen. There was the usual broad grateless hearthstone, elevated some inches above the flagged floor, the usual wide chimney, the usual "reckon-crook" of the district. A dresser with a half-filled plate-rack stood opposite to the window; a white scoured table, with a few rush-

bottomed chairs, completed the furniture of this characteristic apartment.

A door on the left opened into the one sitting-room, which Miss Craven had done her best to make as attractive as might be. And the mid-day sun, slanting through the diamond panes, certainly fell upon some touching evidences of Dorothy's desire and power to make the best of things.

Her finest geraniums—one and all—stood in the two deep window-sills. Among them were fuchsias still in bloom, a thriving lemon-plant, a little dark-leaved rose-tree. The mantle-shelf held some of the same exquisite old china that Genevieve had admired at the Hags; round the room were ranged some four or five old oak chairs; and, wonderful to say, the deep recesses were filled with empty book-shelves.

“Mr. Quale put 'em up at his own expense,” said Dorothy. “Simon Frost put 'em up for him, an' he made him this thing; a cabinet, he called it, to put his lumps o' stone an' bits o' broken pot into. Folks about here reckoned he was gettin' childish; but when you came to talk to him you soon found out

that there was a meanin' in his childishness. Why, he'd bits o' queer pottery 'at he'd picked up i' this very field, 'at he said had been laid there ever since the Romans camped up yonder on Langbarugh Moor."

Genevieve was taking rapid notes of the capabilities of the little place ; it could soon be made home-like and comfortable. She raised no doubt, even where doubts might have been raised ; and Dorothy was almost moved to gratitude by the reasonable silences and lightsome little speeches, which perhaps she only half understood. She had not thought that this fine princess would have accepted so readily an exile that included such conditions as sleeping-rooms under the bare sloping thatch, and a diamond-paned window under her dressing-table instead of over it. Dorothy was not unused to the idea of self-sacrifice, nevertheless she began to suspect its existence in Genevieve Bartholomew with surprise.

The orchard was at the back of the cottage. There was a door opening out of the kitchen, a little flight of grass-grown steps with a hand-rail ; and underneath the gnarled boughs

of the apple-trees there was an old draw-well, with its moss-grown bucket, its worn handle, and its red rusty chain.

"There!" said Genevieve, "I have always said that some day there would come to me a sudden longing to be an artist. The moment has come. The draw-well is my fate. Let me sit on the steps to contemplate that green bucket and my future existence."

"I will have no rival under my own roof; besides, I am sure the studio will not accommodate two artists," said Mr. Bartholomew, walking down the orchard path to the joiner's workshop, which stood beyond the fruit-laden trees.

"I should say it was quite as good a place as the barn that Landseer made into a studio at St. John's Wood," said Genevieve, following Miss Craven into the big, bare-looking workshop; and, truth to say, it did not promise ill. There was space enough, light enough, and it appeared to be at least weather-proof.

Some business matters between Miss Craven and Mr. Bartholomew were settled then and there, while Genevieve wandered about

ankle-deep 'amongst the tall grasses that were quivering and whitening under the bending boughs. A robin was chirping out his bright autumn notes overhead ; apples came tumbling down unexpectedly ; some mild-eyed cattle were looking over the hedge.

"I shall design a frieze for the studio from this," said Mr. Bartholomew, coming back up the path. "It shall be an interweaving of red-cheeked apples on lichened boughs, and golden-haired maidens by moss-covered wells."

Genevieve made answer in lively phrase ; she hardly knew what it was that she was saying. She was wondering how long it was since she had heard her father speak of any artistic thing he meant to do in such tones as these. True, it was but a small thing—the straw to show which way the current was setting, and the current was setting rightly ; so much at least was evident.

How quickly it had all been done ! A short walk in the October sunshine, a saunter round a cottage, through an apple-orchard, and the future was determined. Here was a home, a place to live so much life in, work



so much work, suffer so much, hope so much, grow so much. Everything looked fair; the fairest looked possible. The outer and apparent narrowness and straitness of things held no threat of a corresponding straitness of soul; rather was it otherwise. Here, if anywhere, was room for a soul to expand to its own full growth, unbruised by contact with souls whose growth means hardening. The very air had promise in it, and the sunshine stirred the veins of life till the mere prospect of living was a bountiful good.

“And now, dear, I have been recollecting myself,” said Mr. Bartholomew when they were once more in the lane. “I have remembered the fatiguing day you had yesterday, and have decided that you shall go back with Miss Craven, and rest till dinner-time. I am going over to Thurkeld Abbas to see Canon Gabriel.”

“And I am not to go with you?”

Mr. Bartholomew understood the tone, appreciated the effort that graceful obedience required. But apart from the reason he had given, he had enough motive for his decision.

He had a natural desire to be alone as he passed through Murk-Marishes. The place was full of associations. Memory would meet him in the village street, "holding the folded annals of his youth." Regret would seal his lips with her silent finger.

"Yon's Usselby Hall," said Dorothy as she and Genevieve went upward by a shorter path through the fields. Miss Craven was indicating a dark purple point, a mere jagged edge of the moorland, so far as Genevieve could see. The point was the farthest point of Usselby Crag, and the house stood just below among the almost leafless trees; but being at least two miles distant there was little to be seen of it from Netherbank.

"It seems a bleak place for any one to live in," said Genevieve, not much interested in what she was saying.

"So it is," replied Miss Craven; "only nobody does live in it, except old Ben Charlock and Jael. I don't suppose Mr. Kirkoswald will ever come there again to live—not for any length of time. When he was younger he seemed quite fond o' this country. He wrote a book—a poetry book—'Northern

Wood Notes,' he called it; an' you'd ha' thought 'at he cared more for Usselby Crags an' Langbarugh Moor than for all the foreign countries i' the world put together. I've heard say 'at he's shamed o' some o' them poems now. He was only a lad, just fresh from Oxford, when he wrote them. He's written another book since—not poetry; it's something about philosophy—'The Philosophy of Culture,' I think it's called. I saw it once in a bookseller's shop over at Market Studley. But I could make nothing of it; it was over far-learnt for me. It's curus 'at he never puts no name to his books—nothing but his initials, 'G. K.'; for I've heard Canon Gabriel say 'at he was a first-rate scholar, an' might do anything he liked so far as book-learnin' went."

So Miss Craven ran on, much to Genevieve's satisfaction, since it appeared to be an evidence of conciliatory intention. And Genevieve had the rare merit of being a good listener. Many a time—as now, for instance—she listened for sympathy's sake until she found herself listening for her own pleasure and interest; for after all it was something

to know that any fine morning might bring them a neighbour whom it would be good to meet in the intellectual sparseness of Murk-Marishes.

## CHAPTER VIII.

BIRKRIGG GILL.

“ Yet half I seemed to recognize some trick  
Of mischief happened to me, God knows when —  
In a bad dream perhaps.”

ROBERT BROWNING.

MEANWHILE Noel Bartholomew was going on his way, suffering a quieter sadness than he had prepared himself to suffer. No agitations beset him as he passed through the “long unlovely street” of the low-lying hamlet. There was the door where his heart was used to beat; it was the door of a small dark house under some trees. It was empty now, and falling fast into ruin. This was well.

That past history of his was not romantic, as people count romance in these days. It all passed through his brain in a few moments as he stood there by the little gate that was dropping to the ground for very age.

He had been lodging at Hunsgarth Haggs, painting, studying, dreaming, for two long summers, when he first met Clarice Brooke.

It only seemed like yesterday that he had sat there by the hedgerow sketching rapidly, eagerly, not noting the storm that was coming over the moor. Suddenly it burst upon him. The nearest shelter was the house under the trees; and before he could enter the porch the door was opened for him by a tall, slight girl dressed in deep mourning, who had evidently been weeping. The tears were wet on her eyelids, even as she smiled her welcome; and, perhaps, she would hardly have cared to smile at all if she had not seen that the stranger was almost as shy as herself. . . . That was the beginning—tears, sympathy, a sweet smile, a sudden compassion.

Clarice Brooke was the daughter of an architect, who had gone to his grave worn out with failure, and the sorrow and shame of failure, leaving his only child to the untender mercies of an elderly cousin of her mother's, her sole relative so far as she knew. When Miss Peters died, her annuity dying with her, Noel Bartholomew was thankful to

the core of him that he was able to offer a home, a name, and a life's deep love to the woman whose love had been his from the day that her eyes first fell upon him. It came in the end to be such love as he had half-despaired of winning; and he knew well that in winning it he had won life's best and greatest prize. Till the day of her death he had held no other view than this; and the difference death had made was the difference of love's increase rather than of love's change or ending.

After standing there a while, thinking, yearning, fighting with the strong, silent despair which had never left him for one waking hour, he passed on, turning away by the road that led through the sedgy marsh to Thirkeld Abbas. The little town looked exactly as it had always looked. The Rectory was there by the church; the old clock in the tower was chiming the quarters as sweetly as ever. A young clergyman was coming out by the vestry-door. He blushed with surprise at the sight of a stranger in the streets of Thirkeld Abbas.

"Mr. Severne, I believe? May I introduce

myself? My name is Bartholomew," said the stranger courteously, hoping to overcome the young curate's deepening confusion; but it was not to be lightly overcome.

"Oh, I say!" exclaimed the young man, with another and a deeper blush, and a smile that was, perhaps, more than adequate to the occasion. "Canon Gabriel will be sorry—he'll be awfully sorry. He's gone to Market-Studley to a Ruri-decanal meeting. But won't you come in? Won't you have some luncheon or—or something?"

"Thank you: not to-day," said Mr. Bartholomew. "I shall be over to-morrow, most likely, or the next day, when I hope to have the pleasure of seeing the Canon, and of meeting you again. I expect that we shall be very dependent upon our neighbours—my daughter and I."

"Shall you?—shall you really?" exclaimed the young man, opening his blue eyes in surprise. "I say, that is good news!" He was blushing still, or blushing again; it is difficult to know exactly which to say. The last impression Mr. Bartholomew had of him was an impression of a deep crimson blush,



a smile that was almost a laugh from very nervousness, and an intensely clerical low-crowned hat.

"Nevertheless there is a charm about the boy," Noel Bartholomew said to himself as he went onward through the street. He would not go back the same way again. There were ways enough to choose from.

It was afternoon now, but the sun went on shining brightly, warmly. It was like a mild April day with touches of September sadness in it. To a man who had been in London all the summer the feeling of emancipation came with a freshness and a fulness hardly to be comprehended except by experience. The blue air, the soft wind, the silence, the solitude were as so many enchantments, leading him on and on, by field and road and marsh and farm till his senses were lulled to a kind of dreamful, placid acceptance of all things that were, or had been, or should be. Why make any moan in such a world?

Presently he perceived that he had gone farther than he had intended. It was no matter. There was the path up through Birkrigg Gill to the moor, and he could

soon skirt the edge of the moor and drop downward to the Haggs. . . . Was the time seeming long to Genevieve ?

So he went on under the yellow leaves, down into the bottom of the Gill, where the beck ran swiftly toward the sea, gurgling round and under the great green boulders, over the many-tinted stones. Glossy fronds of hart's-tongue fern curved gracefully by the water's edge; the scarlet berries of the cuckoo-pint made rich contrast among the various greenery of the undergrowth; the primrose leaves were fading among the dead pine-needles that strewed the ground; rich russet-tinted fir-cones were dropping noiselessly into the soft carpet. The light breeze was hushed down there; all was silent save the soothing murmur of the little stream.

Was it a dream? Was it a poem? A minute more, a sudden turn in the path, and he stood in the presence of a living picture.

A good picture flashes itself upon your senses in all its entirety at a single glance; in one moment your conception is made. Important details may remain to be considered, but they do not affect that first force-

ful impression. So forceful was it in this case that Noel Bartholomew stood still, arrested by a figure as strikingly picturesque as any he had ever placed on canvas in his life. It was the figure of a lady attired in a sweeping drapery of pale pink serge. She was below the road, sitting on one of the large stones by the side of the stream. Her hat was lying among the ferns behind her; an Indian shawl of glowing colour fell from her shoulders; her white arm, only half concealed by the soft lace that edged her sleeve, was thrown outwards, so that her hand touched lightly a spray of not-yet-leafless honeysuckle. The dark head, resting on the other hand, was turned a little upward, so that the face, with all its beauty of olive tint, of full rich curve, of vivid expression, was seen to the uttermost advantage. It was a beauty that was startling; there was something strange in it, something perplexing.

In that moment of surprise Noel Bartholomew was not conscious of any admiration, perplexing or other. As was usual with him, he could not throw off the dreamful mood he had been in all at once. There was always

an interval between absence and presence of mind. It might be that the interval was longer than usual this time. As it has been said, he stood still a few seconds while a confused sense of recognition was stealing over him. Then he simply raised his hat, as much by way of apology for intrusion as by way of salutation, and passed on, saying to himself, "It is Miss Richmond; certainly, it is Miss Richmond!"

Once he fancied that a little sound came after him through the trees, a sound as of a musical, mocking, audible something that might be a spoken word, or might be a mere echo of a word, or even a mere memory of one reverberating across the unforgotten years. Vague as it was, it haunted him all along the edge of Langbarugh Moor.

## CHAPTER IX.

## FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS.

"They out-talk'd thee, hiss'd thee, tore thee?  
Better men fared thus before thee;  
Fired their ringing shot and pass'd  
Hotly charged—and sank at last."

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

THE weather that one remembers for half a lifetime is always weather that is complete of its kind—the unbroken calm, the unmitigated storm, the time of ceaseless rain, of sustained drought. These are remembered as much by their unity of impression as by their rarity of occurrence.

Genevieve Bartholomew will always remember that first perfect autumn at Netherbank; the clear blue skies that went on being blue quite into December; the pale warm

sun that threw long shadows across the grass all day, that lighted up the little house, and lent a new harmony to the soft, restful colouring that was so daintily disposed and arranged. Truly it had been a labour of love, that pleasant home-making, and full of new and unhopd-for experiences.

“You must feel rather like a bride,” Dorothy Craven said one day, when she came down to see the transformation which had been so quickly wrought, and so cheaply too, for the most part, as Miss Craven saw at a glance. The delicate coral-coloured stencilling on the walls; the curious pale grey-green tints of the drapery that covered the old sofa and the chairs; the quaint festoons of Indian muslin and creamy lace that hung about the little windows, were none of them expensive luxuries. The things which represented money were those that had come across the moor in the carrier’s-waggon, the books, the pictures, the large screen of ancient needlework, and the soft rugs that covered the floor.

The piano had come later, with some necessities for the studio, easels, lay-figures, canvases. Genevieve saw them come, she

watched her father as he unpacked them and put them in their places. Her feeling as she watched was like an emotion, to be kept strictly in the silence that Fate prescribes for hopes that are yet unaccomplished.

It had never occurred to Genevieve that the little door under the thatched porch would be opened so many times to admit visitors, strangers with friendly faces and voices, with strong northern accents, with wonderings and questionings, reserved and unreserved admirations. Some of them came from afar and stayed to tea; and some went home congratulating themselves that the Bartholomews were likely to remain in the neighbourhood for an indefinite length of time. It seemed an odd thing to leave London, to break up a home, to choose a place like Murk-Marishes to live in; but then it was quite understood that people of genius were odd, always and unmistakably odd in everything they did.

It was mentioned—almost with dissatisfaction—that Mr. Bartholomew's manner was not so odd as it might have been; that his behaviour on the whole was really very much

like that of any other gentleman. This was a reversal of ideas still existent in remote districts; and therefore made opening for doubt and speculation. To some simple souls it was a little relief that he should sit and talk of his crop of apples, of the way the studio chimney smoked when the wind was in the north; that he should confess to having read the *Market-Studley Gazette*, that he should already know something of local politics. But there were others who agreed that this was not—well, it was not what people expected of a man whose name had been seen in a hundred newspapers, with praise and commendation, and unlimited prophecy attached to it. It was as if he had been guilty of fraudulent pretence.

If Noel Bartholomew could only have known what was expected of him by his neighbours it is sadly possible that he might have endeavoured to save them from disappointment. It would have been so very easy to save them. But since he might not know, nor even conjecture, he went on laying himself open to suspicion—nay, to worse than suspicion. Mrs. Caton, who was a lawyer's



widow, and who claimed to be the leader of such intellectual and artistic society as the neighbourhood afforded, gave her verdict at once and unhesitatingly : " There is nothing in the man," she said with an air of finality. She was in her own house when she said it, an old-fashioned stone house standing back from the main street of Thurkeld Abbas. It was showily furnished, and the lady was dressed to be in keeping with it. The prettiest things she possessed were her little fair-haired twin girls, Edil and Ianthe. They were always brought down when visitors came ; no one perceiving more clearly than Mrs. Caton herself the value of the children, of their pretty hair, their fashionable dress, as picturesque incidents in her life and its surroundings. She was not unpicturesque herself, being a large, white, fair woman with very blue eyes, and a clear knowledge of what was becoming in the way of dress.

It need hardly be said that Mrs. Caton had her place in the established society of Thurkeld Abbas ; nor that her verdict concerning any new-comers would have its due and sufficient weight. Nevertheless, at the

moment when' her verdict was given it was not received with that respectful acquiescence to which she was accustomed. "There is nothing in him," she had said emphatically, and for a moment there was silence.

Miss Standen, an elderly lady, who had been three times to London in her younger days, and twice since her maturity, and who therefore ventured occasionally to have an opinion of her own, put a question to Mrs. Caton. "Have you seen much of Mr. Bartholomew?" she asked significantly.

The turn of Mrs. Caton's head was something to be remembered. She had seen Mr. Bartholomew once; and Miss Standen knew quite well that she had seen him once.

"These things are not questions of time," said Mrs. Caton, speaking in her usual oratorical tone. "They are questions of intuition, of acquaintance with human nature. When I meet a man who talks to me for nearly an hour without saying a single striking or remarkable thing, I cannot say that I think that man to be a man of great powers."

"Not of great conversational powers, per-

haps," rejoined Miss Standen. "But does Mr. Bartholomew profess to be gifted in that way? He is an artist."

"To say that a man is an artist, that is an artist of any eminence," returned Mrs. Caton, "is to say that he is a man of thought, to imply that he is capable of finer thought, of finer feeling than his neighbours. Now, if a man can think, it is only common sense to suppose that he can utter his thoughts."

"Not on demand, not when he feels that he is being watched and weighed for the benefit of the neighbourhood," interposed little Mrs. Damer, a lady who always appeared to be on the verge of losing her temper, and did, in point of fact, lose it occasionally. "If I were Mr. Bartholomew I should stick stolidly to the price of potatoes, and the surprising cheapness of moor mutton."

"That is just about what he did 'stick to,'" rejoined Mrs. Caton, who could express inverted commas with unsurpassable skill.

"But you admire *Miss* Bartholomew?" interposed young Mrs. Pencefold, in a conciliatory tone. "Surely you admire her?"

"My dear, I *do* admire her," replied Mrs.

Caton, with judicial considerateness. "I admire her prettiness, her politeness, and her slight figure. But there I must stop, it seems. I do not wish to give offence; and we can all of us hold our own opinion. No one will be more glad than I if the Bartholomews should prove to be acquisitions to the more intellectual society of the place."

Again there was a wondering silence, and again it was broken by Miss Standen.

"Mr. Bartholomew is very much altered, don't you think he is, Mrs. Caton?" asked the lady in civil tones.

"Altered! Altered from what?"

"From what he was twenty years ago."

There was a pause, a stare, a little laugh.

"My dear Miss Standen! Twenty years ago I was a child in the schoolroom."

"Probably: but you are the same age as Miss Richmond, exactly the same. Twenty years ago she was seventeen, old enough to carry on a vigorous flirtation with Mr. Bartholomew, who was years older than she was. I saw nothing of it myself, but I heard plenty. It was said that he couldn't go out sketching anywhere in the district without

her joining him, and sitting watching him for hours together."

"That might be due to her love of art," suggested Mrs. Pencefold, a rather amiable Lancashire lady, of sufficiently good birth to be able to feel some natural sense of duty in defending a member of a county family.

Her suggestion was received with incredulous smiles, and the smiles were followed by incredulous words, by words implying more than incredulity. It was a little sad to any one with eyes open to see the sadness of it all.

Mrs. Damer was not quite sure that her eyes were open : she had an impression that she did sometimes see, that she oftener tried to see, but that her mental eyes were holden by some narrowness of education, of opportunity, of intellectual birthright. She was not sure even of such vision as she had. She knew it to be limited : it might be erroneous. She was certainly aware that she saw things with other eyes than her neighbours saw them, and her nature was such that the effect upon herself was apt to be stimulating. She was nothing if not courageous ; and her courageousness led her some-

times into—shall we say deep water, or hot water? Perhaps either would do.

At the present moment she was listening in silence, but not with patience. Truth to say, she was growing very impatient, and somewhat indignant too. She was not a woman who made any special profession of Christian charity, not more than the other church-going, district-visiting ladies who sat there; but this absolute uncharity struck her soul's sense keenly. Not one voice had been raised to utter one kindly word concerning these strangers, who had come to make a home in the midst of them. There had been nothing save pre-judgments, disapprobations, hints, detractions. And what ground, what reason had they for it all? The question burst forth at last with startling unexpectedness.

“What have they done, these people, that we should speak of them as we are doing?” the little woman asked with heightened colour, and a sudden gleam in her eyes. She looked at the lady who had spoken last, then at Mrs. Caton; they were too much surprised to reply.

"I must speak," Mrs. Damer went on; "that man's face—it would be more polite to say Mr. Bartholomew, but let it pass—his face struck me as being so full of sorrow that I feel compelled to speak. Some one said awhile ago that there was nothing in him; if there is nothing else in him, there is a soul that has gone through a martyrdom of some kind. That look of patience, of subdued pain, never came into any human countenance but by great tribulation . . . . We know nothing of it all, nothing of his suffering, nothing of his life, and but very little of his work. Why then should we judge so harshly? Why should we sit in judgment upon him at all?"

"My dear Mrs. Damer," said Mrs. Caton, who had fully recovered herself, "surely you exaggerate the importance of any remarks that may have been made! I may even add that you mistake the nature of them. . . . Judgment! What, in your opinion, is judgment?"

"In my opinion one judges a man when one decides on insufficient data either that he is a flirt, or that he is a fool. We have

decided that Mr. Bartholomew is—if not a fool, at least a stupid and shallow-brained individual, and this because he has talked to some of us for half an hour at a time on topics that we considered trifling and commonplace. I do not doubt it; he talked to me in the same way, evidently hardly knowing that he talked at all, or if he did know, wishing that he might be silent. But why should he talk? Why especially should he talk for effect? Why should he try to impress anybody by fluent orations? His aim is of another kind, of a higher kind. I hate your clever, hard, glittering people, who will speak of a broken heart with an epigram, or crush a reputation with a paradox.”

“I hope it will come to Mr. Bartholomew’s knowledge that he has at least one eloquent friend,” remarked Mrs. Caton with effective contrast of tone.

“I don’t care if it does,” said Mrs. Damer; “and moreover he won’t care either. He has other things to care for; and he knows that he must stand or fall by the work he does, and not by the gossip of the place he lives in. Further than that, he knows that



he has to die, and have his life written in picturesque phrase, and with sensational descriptions, before such as we are can see him in any desirable or worthy light. I saw the other day in a book that Canon Gabriel lent me, that pure genius is probably as unrecognizable as Pure Divinity was when It walked the earth. . . . I believe that is true."

Mrs. Damer went away, doubtless somewhat to her hostess's relief. Yet Mrs. Caton was quite wise enough and clever enough to make the best of things.

"What a dear excitable little woman Mrs. Damer is!" she remarked, carefully re-adjusting the folds of her dress.

"The way she always stands up for absent people is very nice though," said Mrs. Pencefold. "And really there is something in what she said before she went away. I was thinking about the same thing only a few weeks ago when I was at home. We went over to Haworth one day, and we thought ourselves fortunate in meeting with an elderly woman who, when she was a girl, had been in Charlotte Brontë's class at the Haworth Sunday-school. She was an intelligent

person, with a good memory, but the burden of her recollections of Miss Brontë was very significant. ‘She wur allus little an’ plain,’ said the woman in answer to our inquiries. She remembered Branwell’s wild ways; she had been well acquainted with the father’s eccentricities, but of ‘Miss Charlotte’ there was only the one impression: ‘She wur allus little an’ plain.’”

“You must not tell that story to Mr. Bartholomew,” said Mrs. Caton. “He might imagine that you were intending to be personal.”

## CHAPTER X.

“WHO RIDES BY WITH THE ROYAL AIR?”

“Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
I know you proud to bear your name ;  
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,  
Too proud to care from whence I came.”

TENNYSON.

COULD the ladies assembled at Mrs. Caton's have been made aware that while they were putting new life into a piece of old gossip, the same story was threatening to repeat itself, it is possible that Mrs. Damer would not have had to leave the house with that uneasy sense of victoriousness.

It was rather an eventful day at the thatched cottage. Something—Noel Bartholomew hardly knew what—it might be the sunshine, the bracing frosty air of the

morning, the peace and stillness of the place ; it might be any of these, or none of them, but something had stirred in his mental veins, and impelled him to the old creative mood that had once been his without let or hindrance. There was no sign of any sudden fine frenzy or enthusiasm. The canvas was placed on the easel, a figure was drawn in rapidly with red chalk ; it was drawn from a sketch made long before, a sketch which was half a study, the head being carefully completed. It was the head of a youngish man, pale, red-haired, intellectual-looking. The expression was perplexing in the extreme. Was he a saint ? a poet ? a casuist ? It was as impossible to help conjecture, as it was to arrive at any definite conclusion.

"You will reproduce it exactly ?" Genevieve asked.

She and her father were sitting over the fire after their early dinner. They were intending to go out after a little while, away across the sunny, furzy upland to the moor. It looked very tempting up there. Cattle were climbing about among the hillocks ; sheep were browsing between the

patches of brown ling. Out on the top there was an old man "graving" turf. By-and-by a carriage with a pair of horses crossed a corner of the edge of the moor.

"Yes; I shall try to reproduce the head as nearly as I can," Mr. Bartholomew was saying in his usual quiet yet intent way. "I did not think it had been so good. I shall not improve upon it."

The two soon relapsed into the pleasant silence that reigned so much in the little room. Genevieve was busy with her needle, embroidering a purple iris upon a piece of gold-coloured satin. Keturah, the small and somewhat eccentric maid-servant, who had been recommended by Miss Craven, was tidying up the garden a little. Presently she burst into the house.

"Here's Miss Richmond fra Yarrell Croft; she's gettin' over t' stile! An' Mr. Cecil's wiv her; an' t' coach is gone doon t' lane. Ah'll bet anything t' coächman's gone to put it up at t' Wheatsheaf . . . Hev Ah to fetch some tea in when they've been here a little bit, as ya tell'd ma when them folks com fra Lowmoor yesterday?"

Genevieve looked up, amused in spite of herself. “You may have the tea ready, Keturah,” she said; “I will ring for it if we should want it. And do try to open the door for Miss Richmond without looking so very much amazed.”

This caution notwithstanding, Keturah’s round eyes were opened to their fullest extent when she reappeared. It was evident that she was proud to find herself ushering in the great lady of the neighbourhood.

All at once the little room seemed to be filled with a strange magnificence. Was it some Eastern queen who was coming forward with such languid, majestic grace, holding out her hand to Mr. Bartholomew, glancing with dark, dreamy, half-closed eyes at Genevieve? She was not smiling, her beautifully curved lips were closed, the under one drawn in like a baby’s, making a deeper shadow round her perfect mouth and chin. Her black hair hung low over a wide, dusky forehead; the very faintest colour was stealing through the olive tints of her face as she began to speak.

“You will hardly remember my brother,”

she said, presenting a tall young man with fair curly hair, uncertain features, and a general expression of self-approval. He had a husky voice, and he blushed a little as Mr. Bartholomew introduced him to Genevieve, whom he had seen more than once at Thurkeld Abbas.

Miss Richmond was watching him as she seated herself on a sofa near the window ; a subtle perfume was stealing from the folds of her dress of rich Indian silk ; the barbaric-looking ornaments about her wrists and in her ears were twinkling and tinkling as she moved. She did not seem to hear Genevieve's polite remark that she was glad to have the pleasure of seeing her.

Miss Richmond sat for some moments without speaking, looking from under her half-closed eyelids straight into Genevieve's face. This might have been a little perplexing, a little oppressive, if Genevieve had cared to find it so ; but the girl had only a vague notion that this was an old friend of her father's, to whom she was bound to show a courteous deference. Mr. Bartholomew was talking to Cecil Richmond. Diana, lifting

her eyes from Genevieve's face, took a leisurely survey of the room.

"You are intending to remain, I perceive," she said presently, speaking in the low, deliberate tone that suited herself and her manner so well. People were compelled to listen, and to listen attentively to every syllable, if they cared to hear what she was saying; and for one reason or another most people did care.

"Yes, I hope we shall remain," Genevieve replied. "I hope so more earnestly every day."

"You like living in the country, then?"

"I like living in this country, intensely. I did not know that I was capable of caring so strongly for a place in so short a time. . . . I think I hardly yet understand it," the girl went on smilingly. "It is as if Nature had some odic force, some secret influence, which she had never cared to exercise upon me till now."

"Ah! That is the sort of thing that is to be found in modern poetry, I suppose?"

Genevieve looked up quickly; she was surprised and a little puzzled by the tone.

"Is it?" she asked. "Did it strike you



like an echo? I was only trying to express what I felt. Still these days of many books are certainly days of many echoes. One comes across them everywhere, in literature and conversation. Do you not think so?"

"That is clever of you, very clever!" said Miss Richmond. "You are trying to find out if I am well-read. I am not. I never open a book, not now."

This was said with the same cold deliberateness of tone. Genevieve, who was not unaccustomed to human eccentricities, felt that some demand was about to be made upon her faculty of interpretation. She was perplexed, yet interested; and already awakened to the perception that here was a human being who presented difficulties enough to repel, mystery enough to attract. This perception was, of course, mainly intuitive; and being premature, might certainly fail to stand the test of further intercourse.

There was a brief silence, during which Genevieve had been fully aware that she was the object of a second close scrutiny; and her colour deepened perceptibly under the conviction. When she looked up again a

rather striking change had come over Miss Richmond's face: some of the self-complacency had gone out of it; so had the touch of superciliousness, and a new element had appeared in the place of these.

Was it sympathy? Was it a sudden motion towards friendliness of feeling?

“You are not at all what I have been expecting you would be,” Miss Richmond said, lifting her eyes so as to meet Genevieve's less restrainedly than before.

“You have been thinking of me, then? That was kind,” the girl said. A moment later she added with a smile, “But will you not tell me what you were expecting; and where I fail?”

“The difference is not in the direction of failure,” said Miss Richmond. “I should like to speak out plainly, to tell you the truth, but you would not like it, I perceive that. You would think me rude. As a rule I don't mind being thought rude; but for once I do. There would, however, be no vulgar flattery in my telling you that you have already given me a pleasure, and my pleasures are few, fewer than you may think.”

"You are pleased that we are going to stay at Murk-Marishes?"

"Yes; exceedingly pleased. I had made up my mind that you would not stay; and that it would be your fault, not your father's. I imagined that a town-bred girl would never stand the loneliness of such a place as this." This last sentence was not unpremeditated. Miss Richmond watched carefully how it sped.

"Loneliness!" exclaimed Genevieve, unsuspectingly. "I have never had a lonely hour in my life. Descriptions of loneliness perplex me; I mean the kind of loneliness that is always crying out for human companionship. I do not understand it. Perfect solitude is such a potential thing; so full of influences to which one is never awake in one's social hours. I sometimes think that if I were so placed that I could never be alone, I should sink to a mere clod."

There was a little silence while Miss Richmond was revolving in her mind the significance of these admissions, that is to say a certain significance that they had for her. To herself she was saying, "Then that is evidence enough that you are fancy-free, my

golden-haired princess. I wonder at that, almost as much as I regret it.”

On the whole it was a relief when Miss Richmond expressed a desire to see the studio. Mr. Bartholomew had not found conversation with young Richmond an easy matter; perhaps it had been less easy because of his keen consciousness of Miss Richmond’s attention to all that passed. He knew that no word had escaped her.

They all went out into the sunlit orchard together. Genevieve, walking by Miss Richmond’s side, felt her eighteen years and her general immaturity to be decided disadvantages. She had not noticed till now the stateliness of her companion’s finely moulded figure, the statuesque setting of her head. The cast of *Herè*, which was one of the treasures of the studio, was not more impressively suggestive of Olympian majesty than was the figure and bearing of this imperious-looking Yorkshire lady.

Miss Richmond had a distinct remembrance of the joiner’s shop; yet she showed no surprise when she found herself in an artistically furnished studio, surrounded by rich colouring

carefully subdued, by all the usual and unusual appurtenances of the painter's craft: the sketches that are more suggestive than finished pictures; the casts that appeal only to the few; the odds and ends of bronze and copper, of richly-tinted glass, of roughly moulded clay. There was a piece of old tapestry at one end of the studio, with salmon-coloured figures standing in awkward attitudes on a faded cloud of dark blue wool. On the other side there was a Japanese cabinet, and a brass bowl covered with Madura etched work. A tall Persian jar stood on the ground; behind there was a shield of ancient lacquered wood, and a sword with a Damascened blade was hanging slantwise on the wall between two unfinished pictures. Miss Richmond stopped before one of the pictures. Mr. Bartholomew was near her. Genevieve was showing Cecil Richmond some photographs of the sculpture discovered at Melos. There was a Perseus, a wise-looking Zeus, a goddess without a head, and the beautiful but mutilated figure which the art-critics were wrangling over, one naming it a Urania, and another asserting it to be a wingless Victory.

“I suppose it would be the correct thing to say that I admire them?” said young Richmond, speaking in his usual husky voice, and in a tone that was nearly as languid as his sister’s.

“It would hardly be quite correct to say so if you don’t admire them,” replied Genevieve, who was a little amused. “I hope I was not putting any pressure upon your opinion?”

“No, you weren’t; so I may as well speak the truth. I don’t like statues—never saw a marble thing that I cared for in my life.”

“No! And pictures?”

“Oh, I care for pictures immensely, especially new ones. I ran up to London for three days in June, almost on purpose to see the Academy and the Grosvenor. My word! there was some colour there!”

“There was indeed,” replied Genevieve, repressing a smile. “And since you care so much for colour, you will perhaps like to see some sketches of my father’s. Will you lift that portfolio to the table, please?”

Miss Richmond was not listening to all this. She had but little knowledge of art,

and small liking for even such phases of it as she understood. There were studies, sketches, suggestions on the walls that she did not profess to understand; others that she did not pretend to care for. The head of the pale young man on the easel was in nowise to her taste, and Mr. Bartholomew was not anxious to elicit her opinion concerning it. This was a small matter, but she noticed it; she was even aware that he was sorry that the picture was on the easel at that moment.

She turned from it silently. On the wall near it there was an unfinished single figure, a three-quarter length of a Guinevere, seated on an antique couch, draped with emerald-tinted silk. Her face was pale, full of the "vague spiritual fears" which had come upon her, because.

"The powers that tend the soul,  
To help it from the death that cannot die,  
And save it even in extremes, began  
To vex and plague her."

More care had been bestowed upon the expression, upon the sorrow of the face, the dawning repentance, than upon the actual beauty to be represented by the drawing of

rich contours, or tints of pearl and carnation. The history of the sorrow that her loveliness had wrought was insisted on rather than the loveliness itself. The regret for the past, the pain of the present, the hopelessness of the future—these were the things that had inspired the painter's soul, so that you saw only a fair and remorseful woman, half-ready even then to throw herself at Arthur's feet, had the king been there.

"It is not my notion of Guinevere," said Miss Richmond. "That face reminds me of the face in Velasquez's 'Magdalen at the foot of the Cross,' the one at Farnley, a face that is all tears and tenderness and grief. I can believe in the repentance of Mary Magdalen, but not in the repentance of Guinevere. Perhaps I do not understand the Queen as Tennyson would have her understood; but I always think she must have felt to the last that fate had dealt hardly with her."

"And you think the feeling that life has been hard, and circumstance difficult, would make against human repentance?"

"Yes. Surely it must do that? It must at least do that."



"There I would venture to differ from you," said Bartholomew courteously. "I think that if one's eyes were not holden, one would see hardness and difficulty and trial to be aggravations of remorse rather than palliations of misdeed. The burden is laid with design and with exactness; so much is required because so much was given, and no one of us fails of his part but through weakness or willingness."

"Not willingness—no, not willingness," said Miss Richmond, turning away from the picture. "There are contrary winds in life as in nature, and one is driven on to the rocks all against one's will. One cannot alter one's self, one cannot force circumstance, one cannot move others as one would."

There was a touch as of despair in her tone, born, perhaps, of the thought that her forgetful outspokenness had not been of a nature to create the impression she wished to create. With all her talent she was apt to find her small diplomacies parting unexpectedly in the middle, like the fraying of a garment that has been too long in use.

"You mustn't mind my not admiring your

"Guinevere," she said in conciliatory tones. "There is so much that I can admire—this, for instance. Is it another Tennysonian subject?"

"No, it is not—though I am almost as faithful to Tennyson as Rossetti is to Dante. This picture is, as you see, unfinished. I meant to entitle it, 'The King's Daughter.' It is from the 'Earthly Paradise.'"

"A book I only know by name. I have seen it, of course, but I have never read it. What is the story?"

"There are many stories; this is a scene from one—a parting scene. The lady is the Princess Ingibiorg; the other figure, which is only indicated, is Kiartan, who does not care for her as she would have him care, but who is yet passionately sorry for her. The beauty of the passage, to my thinking, is the Princess's sorrow for his sorrow. . . . I have the book here. . . . That is the part I meant to illustrate—

Alone she was, her head against the wall  
Had fallen; her heavy eyes were shut when he  
Stood on the threshold; she rose quietly,  
Hearing the clash of arms; and took his hand,  
And thus with quivering lips awhile did stand



It is nearly four years since the painting was begun."

"Really! Then I see; you have lost the—the feeling for it?"

"Yes; that is it precisely," said Noel Bartholomew, almost betraying by the glance he gave his surprise that she should understand. "The mood in which I began it is dead; I think it is dead for ever."

Miss Richmond stood silent a moment, looking into his face with a look of intense, concentrated compassion, such as he had never dreamed could be made visible on a countenance like hers. It almost startled him from his indifference.

"The Princess's face is a portrait, then?" Miss Richmond asked, speaking in a subdued tone that was far removed from curiosity.

"It is, and it is not," the painter replied. "I had a model—that is to say, a lady staying with us for a few days kindly sat for me. She had a finely picturesque face, pale and sad-looking; but I tried to idealize the features, partly that she might never be recognized, so that I should not call it a portrait."

"Could you not finish it if the same lady sat to you again?"

"No, not now. I might finish the figure of the Princess, and I might paint a Kiartan to stand beside it; but the whole thing would be worthless, and wooden as the chair on which the picture stands. There would be no beauty in it, nor any felicity, nor any life whatever."

"And you have no hope concerning it—I mean hope for the future?"

"None."

Miss Richmond again stood silent, with musing eyes turned downward to the floor.

"I wonder how it is?" she said at length, speaking softly. "I should have thought that the chief idea of the picture, the pain of parting, would have been an idea that you could have recalled always?"

Noel Bartholomew looked up, his eyes seeming to quiver for one quick moment under their lids.

"I can recall it," he replied slowly. "Yes, you are right; I can always recall it, if—if it should ever be absent long enough to need recall."

"Then I see why you cannot put it into paint," said Miss Richmond, looking into his face with grave and fervent compassion. To herself she spoke in another and a wilder way.

## CHAPTER XI.

CANON GABRIEL.

“But thou and I have shaken hands,  
Till growing winters lay me low;  
My paths are in the fields I know,  
And thine in undiscovered lands.”

TENNYSON, *In Memoriam*.

Two quiet days passed before another carriage containing visitors awoke the wonder that Keturah's round eyes seemed made to express. Genevieve was just going down to the studio with a cup of tea for her father.

“You can show these gentlemen down the orchard,” she said. “And once more let me ask you to look less amazed. Now don't forget, Keturah.”

“No, ma'am; Ah won't forget. Ah niver forgets nothing. Ah'm a despert deep thinker.”

Noel Bartholomew put down his palette and brushes gladly for once; and for once there was a really glad look on his face. He hastened to meet a friend.

How lightly one uses the word! how one squanders it on the most inadequate occasions, making it do duty for a dozen other words of lesser value that would better far express the lesser meaning!

Year by year, day by day, "dream delivers us to dream, and there is no end to illusion."

No end to illusion, no end to hope fed by one's own fire, no end to the darkness that follows when the soul that should have kept the flame of human faith alive turns ruthlessly to extinguish it.

A shattered friendship, if it ever had any fineness, any soul of goodness, any radiance of spirituality, is every whit as destructive of belief in the faithfulness of manhood as a shattered love.

So, if there be any healing waters left anywhere on the earth, any Bethesda Pool where one might be made whole of the wounds that one has had, one may rest



assured that these waters lie in the depths of a true friend's soul.

Alas, that the Angel of Pity should have no certain season for his coming!

We wait and wait, being among the great multitude of the impotent. *They* would help us, as we them, but the feet that halt and the withered hands prevent. Looks pass across, and yearnings. Does God take count of these?

For Noel Bartholomew the healing water of sympathy was stirred to its divinest effect by the man whose mere coming had power to raise expectation, whose mere glance raised expectation to a spiritual certainty.

He was an aged man, a man of thought, a man of prayer, of suffering, of endurance. All this, and much more than this, was written on the pale intensity of his face.

The physical life of the man had never been fully equal to the demands made upon it by the soul's life. The higher had dominated the lower at a fearful expense to the latter. Now, you saw as it were through the tissues of the frame, and you dreaded the effect of the quick flush that mounted

to the thought-riven forehead, as you might have dreaded to see the point of a lancet near a main artery.

It had so happened that Canon Gabriel and Genevieve had not met before.

"I have been wishing to come for days past," he said, taking her hand in his and holding it with a warm friendliness which the girl felt to be very precious. The old man's kind sad eyes, the wistful simplicity of the smile that parted his still beautiful mouth, were expanding her confidence in himself as the sun of a summer's dawn expands the lily till it yields its heart's last secret. Genevieve had no secrets that the world would have called such; but even in that first hour she betrayed the kinship of her soul to a soul that understood.

"I was needing him," she said to herself when she knelt for her prayer that night.

The clergyman who accompanied Canon Gabriel was, of course, the blushing Mr. Severne, the Canon's curate. He was still blushing. His blush would have been the one distinctive thing about him but for his smile, which was distinctive also. It was an

irresistible smile, in the sense of forcing you to smile either with the curate or at him. To ignore it was a physical impossibility. Yet in common fairness it must be added that there was something about the man that saved his smile, his blush, and himself from any touch of ridiculousness; a something that day by day commended him more warmly to Canon Gabriel's affectionate regard.

It could hardly be said that his desire to please was more evident to-day than any other day. It was always evident; and always combined with touching little doubts about his success. The doubts were not expressed except by blushes, which were more expressive than any words he had at command. Before five minutes were over he was openly deploring his limited vocabulary. Only Genevieve was listening. Mr. Bartholomew and Canon Gabriel were discussing other things.

"I—I don't know whether it's worst in one's sermons, or in one's parish work," said Mr. Severne ingenuously. "And when I think anybody is listening who—who minds about it, I get awfully nervous."

"Do you? That is a pity. But I should think you could not feel nervous at the school-room service at Murk-Marishes. The people there seem as if they would be so very unexacting."

"So they do, as a rule. But now and then other people come, more—more educated in a way."

"Are you meaning me? I was there on Sunday afternoon."

"Yes; so you were. But you sat behind the stove-pipe, and—and——"

"And you were grateful to me for sitting behind the stove-pipe?"

"Well, I was," admitted Mr. Severne, blushing and laughing with real enjoyment of the position. "If you'd been looking at me I should have felt ever so much worse."

"Then you may rely upon my not looking at you in future. There is no necessity for it. There is so much to be seen from the schoolroom windows. But you must promise me not to think that my attention is wandering if you see me looking out of the windows."

"I—I should be glad if I could think it

was wandering—then perhaps you wouldn't find out that I was wandering; it is so difficult to keep to one's subject. But even that is not so difficult as visiting in the parish. I never know what to say—especially first when I go in."

"Couldn't you ask after the baby?"

"I do; I'm awfully fond of children. But some of the people haven't any; some of them seem as if they hadn't anything, and didn't do anything that one could talk about. They don't read, they don't think, they don't work, and they don't go anywhere."

"And they don't gossip?"

"Oh, don't they! . . . I—I beg pardon. . . . I mean——"

"Severne, come and look at this picture."

It was the Canon's gentle voice that spoke; and he added, in the humorous way that sat so well upon his fine gravity—

"I am sure I need not apologize to Miss Bartholomew for relieving her of the burden of entertaining you."

"Well, I—I don't know," said Mr. Severne, blushing two shades deeper. "Perhaps I

may have been entertaining Miss Bartholomew ! ”

“ That is eminently probable. But now look at this head. What should you say of the man who sat for that ? ”

“ I should have to think before I said anything. Is it meant for a saint ?—a St. John, for instance ? ”

“ That is how it impresses you ? ” said Mr. Bartholomew.

“ Well, it did at first.”

“ And now ? ”

“ Now I seem to see some hardness in those hazel-coloured eyes, and there is something very like hardness, too, about the mouth. Still, it is a good face, and it is very—very intellectual. Don’t you think so, Canon Gabriel ? ”

“ I think it is wonderful ! wonderful to see a Judas in a face like that ! ”

“ A Judas ! ”

“ That is Bartholomew’s idea of Judas ; and I think in future it will be mine. I could conceive of Christ choosing a man like that to be His disciple. There are such magnificent possibilities in the head and face.

You say to yourself, that man may be anything he chooses. But it is not a Hebrew type, Bartholomew ? ”

“ No ; it is more Hellenic, and therefore more suggestive of the best that has been, or will be, physically speaking.”

“ Exactly ; but one hardly cares for that. It is the power, the subtle inconsistency, the possibility of pathos underlying the hard determinedness. One sees the man who could betray his Master for a paltry price ; but one also sees the man who went and hanged himself because his remorse for so doing was greater than he could bear.”

“ It has always been terribly perplexing to me,” said Genevieve. “ I cannot comprehend the alternations of feeling that must have understruck both motive and action.”

“ You will comprehend it better when you are older,” said the Canon. “ Such alternations are as sadly possible to-day as they were eighteen hundred years ago ; as possible in Murk-Marishes as in Judæa. There are doubtless people who can love and hate the same persons by turns ; and who can feel either passion with equal violence.”

"They must be very miserable people," said Mr. Severne, who had a habit of putting hypothetical cases to himself, and was wondering at that moment whether he could ever come to dislike Miss Bartholomew.

"I think you said this head was only a study," observed the Canon. "You are going to paint a picture from it?"

"Yes; the picture is begun. It is here—this morning's work still wet. I am not satisfied with it to-day."

Mr. Bartholomew was unwise enough to turn his canvas, so that his visitors could see his work. It might be that he had a motive in so doing.

"Oh, I say! how curious!" Mr. Severne exclaimed. "It is the same, the Judas over again, and yet it is like—like some one else. Don't you see, Canon Gabriel?"

"I hardly know what I see yet," said the Canon, speaking more cautiously. "It is so very unfinished."

"So it is; the hair isn't done, and all that; but if it had been darker, and had had black hair hanging over the forehead, I should certainly have said it was Miss Richmond.



But it is strange ; it is so like the Judas too !”

“ You are rather a stupid boy,” said the Canon, drawing the young man’s attention to another sketch ; and perceiving with some satisfaction that the painter was amused rather than annoyed.

“ It is curiously difficult sometimes,” said Bartholomew, “ to catch a likeness ; but it is often equally difficult to get rid of a likeness after it has once got in. It may have come in unintentionally, but no intention will suffice to dismiss it.”

“ Then that would account for some of the repetitions that one often sees in pictures by the same artist,” said Canon Gabriel. “ But what, or rather who, is this ? A St. Agnes, surely ?”

“ No ; I meant that for the nameless sister of Sir Percivale. I used to wonder why Tennyson had not bestowed upon her one of the most beautiful of his beautiful names ; now I think it better she should have no name.” The picture was only a head, only a pale, silken head, with a wan and prayerful face, and eyes with the “ deathless passion ” of holiness in them.

It was hung rather high, and Mr. Severne was looking up at it as he might have looked at some marvellously wrought altar-piece. Canon Gabriel was saying softly :—

“For on a day she sat to speak with me,  
And when she came to speak, behold her eyes  
Beyond my knowing of them, beautiful,  
Beyond all knowing of them, wonderful,  
Beautiful in the light of holiness.”

“Would you mind standing there for ten minutes, Mr. Severne?” asked the painter courteously, as the Canon’s voice ceased.

“No; I shouldn’t mind a bit, of course not,” said the curate, blushing quite the deepest tint that he had exhibited yet. “Are you going to make a sketch of me? Oh, I say! I should like it, I should really!”

“Then look quite grave, please, quite quiet, as you were looking just now.”

“And we will go up to the cottage and have some tea,” said Genevieve, turning to Canon Gabriel.

“Ah, yes; thank you. That is wise. Severne will never behave as he ought to do if we remain.”

## CHAPTER XII.

SIR GALAHAD.

"A maiden knight—to me is given  
Such hope, I know not fear;  
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven  
That often meet me here."

TENNYSON.

"YOUR father's imagination seems to be recovering its activity," said Canon Gabriel when they reached the sitting-room. There was a cheery fire burning; a smell of turf came from the kitchen; a breeze was stirring the ivy-leaves to and fro upon the diamond panes; the low sun threw long rays between the flower-pots and across the cosy little room.

"I think his imagination has been active all the while," Genevieve said thoughtfully. "Perhaps only too active. It was the power

to realize the things he saw that had gone from him. The misery of it was in that."

"The power, not the will?"

"No; not the will, never the will. It was strange. I can hardly explain, though I think I understand. It seemed as if he had not power to obey his will. I have known him will to do a thing, and compel himself to do it; but none knew better than he knew the utter worthlessness of it when it was done. And people did so torture him. They could not understand. I believe the world looks upon the production of art, or of poetry, as upon the production of so much brick-laying."

"But you are happier about your father now?"

"Tremulously happy."

"Ah! I see."

"It is a kind of crisis. So much may depend upon so little just now."

"What sort of idea should you think he has about Mr. Severne? I mean what sort of artistic idea? He seemed struck by something."

Genevieve smiled softly. "I think my

father's idea would be the same as mine—that Mr. Severne would make a good pendant to the sister of Sir Percivale.”

“A Sir Galahad? That is strange! I have had the same notion about him ever since he came. The moment I saw him and heard him speak I thought of the lines—

‘God make thee good as thou art beautiful,  
Said Arthur, when he dubb’d him knight, for none  
In so young youth was ever made a knight.’

It is of course in Severne's youth and in his goodness rather than in his beauty that one sees the analogy. But if any one has seen, or may see, the Holy Grail, then Severne sees it.”

“You can say that of him?”

“Yes; I can say that of him. He may not have seen the cold and silver beam stealing through the moonlight, or the crystal Chalice, rose-red with beatings in it; but he has seen all that these things symbolize. The Chalice of the Wine of Charity has touched his lips, and left its odour there; nay, it has gone deeper than that. He is not, I grant it, clever as the world counts cleverness, but he is as willing as St. Paul was to be con-

sidered a fool. And what, after all, is the wisdom of the wisest of us?

‘Would’st thou the life of souls discern?  
Nor human wisdom nor divine  
Helps thee by aught beside to learn  
*Love* is life’s only sign.’”

Genevieve was standing near the fire, her head was raised, her deep, dark eyes were heavy with thought, wistful with strong yearning.

“Canon Gabriel, will you help me, if I begin the quest of the Holy Grail?” she asked, speaking in a tone of timid, childlike humility.

“Certainly, I will help you, my child, if God permit. But I think that the quest has begun for you already.”

## CHAPTER XIII.

MR. ISHMAEL CRUDAS INTRODUCES HIMSELF.

“That day was full of rumours sad, of boats swamped  
out at sea,  
Guns booming in the offing, and wrecks strewn along  
the shore.”

HILDA, *Among the Broken Gods.*

“T’ SNAW’s allus driftin’ ower Langbarugh  
Moor.”

It seemed as if the burden of the old man’s strain was about to work its own fulfilment.

The bright cheery autumn weather came to an end quite suddenly. Where the yellow glow had been, a thick, white snow-fog spread; the hollows between the lands of the stubble fields were filled with a cold blue haze; the distant dark edges of Usselby Crags were shrouded; a piercing wind began to blow;

the last leaves went flying from the trees, and the bare boughs agonized in the pitiless blast.

Late one night the broad white flakes began to fall. Genevieve, looking out from her window under the eaves, saw them flying past in the blue-black darkness made visible by her lamp. They swept horizontally, like morsels of detached, embodied lightning.

Next morning the world beyond the cottage was obliterated; it remained obliterated for several days. Down in the hamlet people were saying that there had been no such snowstorm since the winter that Joseph Craven lost his sheep, and Matthew Christie his life.

After a time there came a pause in the descent of the snow. The frost remained intense for some days, and the wind, at times, high and squally; but at length a really fine-looking morning broke—a keen and clear morning. The sky was of the deepest, coldest steel blue; all along the seaward horizon great wild clouds were driving rapidly, but every now and then broad rays of sunlight shot across the cold white world, making the day seem serene if you only looked landward.



It was tempting to any one with a desire for out-door air, but Mr. Bartholomew had threatenings of bronchial troubles, not new to him, and therefore to be dreaded. This was tiresome, as he was wanting to go over to the Bank at Thurkeld Abbas.

He was rather glad when he saw Miss Craven driving slowly, carefully down the white upland. She drew up by the stile, and Keturah ran along the snow-covered field to hold the horse. Dorothy usually stopped at Netherbank to ask if she could execute any commissions "in the town." She drove an old white pony and a black gig, a turn-out that commanded a respect in Thurkeld Abbas not always accorded to vehicles of greater pretension.

Somewhat to Mr. Bartholomew's perplexity, somewhat to his amusement, Miss Craven refused to transact his business at the Bank.

"I'll not do that," she said in her usual brusque way, "but I'll drive your daughter to the town and back again if you like. I've nothing but myself in the gig, an' I haven't much to do at Thurkeld, only the butter an'

eggs to leave, an' the groceries to get, an' a few things to get at Hartgill's."

"You will let me go, father?" Genevieve asked, a faint glow of delight rising to her cheek as she spoke.

"Why do you ask with such mild emphasis?"

"Because my desire is so strong."

"Exactly," said the father, looking at her with solemn comprehension, as his way was. Then he went to the window. It was easy enough to understand the girl's eager desire to be out there amongst all that new white beauty that was glittering in the sun. Sunshine is always hopeful. After due hesitation a restrained permission was given. Ten minutes later Genevieve was sitting by Miss Craven's side, wrapped from head to foot in furs and shawls, and doing her best to subdue the childlike excitement which was born of the unusual elements in her present and prospective experience.

"Oh look! look there!" she cried, as they turned a corner of the lane that led down into the village. There was a tall, ragged hawthorn hedge on the seaward side, and the

snow had drifted through the interstices, making such strange forms as surely never snow made before. Giant sofas and couches, tall chairs of quaint shapes were ranged one behind another, each with its end to the hedge, all the way along the road, precisely as furniture might have been arranged in a vast show-room. The sight was unique enough to be remembered for a lifetime, but it was not an easy matter to drive through or by this strange display of freaks. Miss Craven was very careful; her old pony was patient and willing, but nervous withal, and the aspect of things was beginning to be less amusing, when the figure of a horseman was seen approaching.

"There!" said Dorothy, with a quick, keen flush of annoyance. "Was ever anything more vexin' than that?"

"Is it some one you know?" Genevieve asked.

"Know! Yes, more's the pity. It's Ishmael Crudas. You'll have heard your father speak of him, I reckon?"

"Yes," said Genevieve, blushing too now, for very sympathy, "my father told me a

little—only a very little. He said that perhaps it would be a pain to you if you thought I knew more.”

“Pain! It’s all pain together. But I don’t mind your knowing. I mind nobody’s knowing. Some day I may tell you myself maybe.”

The horseman approached. He was a grey-haired, keen-eyed man, in later middle age, with a complexion as ruddy and as fresh as it had been thirty years before. Evidently he was a well-to-do man, everything about him, from the sleek, dark, dappled grey he rode to the sound quality of his rough top-coat, bespoke the prosperous, thriving Yorkshire farmer.

“Well done, Miss Craven!” he shouted at the top of a shrill and somewhat penetrating voice. “You’ve about gotten through t’ worst on’t; but mebbe Ah’d better lend ya a hand as far as t’ Wheätsheaf, so as you mayn’t turn reproachful, an saäy ’at Ah’ve got t’ best on’t. Steady! Grizel, steady!”

Miss Craven protested, in tones almost as shrill as his own, thus making it evident that

her interlocutor was rather deaf, as indeed any one might have guessed from his manner of speaking. Apparently her protestations were carried away by the wind, which was boisterous at times. Mr. Crudas dismounted, led his own horse with one hand, and guided the uncertain steps of Miss Craven's pony with the other, Miss Craven meanwhile looking determinedly beyond him with fixed eyes, glowing cheeks, and a firmly closed mouth expressive of the deepest mortification.

"T' road's been cut all t' waäy fra Murk-Marishes to Thurkeld," said Ishmael, remounting and riding by Miss Craven's side. "Ah com round by Briscoe. Ah was on my waäy te t' Haggs te ask aboot that coo 'at ya said was such a bad milker. But Ah shall be up that waäy again next week, an' we can talk things ower. Ah might as well go back by Thurkeld noo as any other waäy. That's road you're bound, Ah reckon?"

Miss Craven admitted that it was, by the slightest possible parting of her lips. To Genevieve's surprise this repressive manner had no particular effect upon Mr. Crudas.

"You're not goin' te introduce me te that

young laädy then, Dorothy?" he said, glancing past Miss Craven with his small keen eyes. "Ah sall ha' te introduce mysel', Ah see, an' Ah can do it wiv a good grace an' all, seeing 'at Ah knew both her father an' her mother afore she was born. Hoo dis yer father like livin' at Murk-Marishes, Miss Bartholomew?"

"He likes it very much, thank you," said Genevieve, leaning forward and answering with one of her rare smiles. "Perhaps you will call at Netherbank? my father would be glad to see you."

"Thank ya, miss, thank ya!" Mr. Crudas shouted in shrill delight. The value of the invitation so graciously given was doubled by the fact that Miss Craven heard it given. It seemed a mere matter of gratitude that Mr. Crudas should ride round to the side of the gig on which Genevieve sat; but another matter was stirring in his brain, or beginning to stir. What if this dainty-looking young lady could be won to sympathy, to help, to the exertion of such influence as she might have with Miss Craven? The thought had struck him on the sudden, and he had been

quick to perceive the possibilities it held. Nothing so likely as the unlikely.

"Despert weather," he began, by way of giving himself time to think how a middle-aged Yorkshire farmer, of rough speech and aspect, might make himself agreeable to a young lady of such perfect manners, such undreamt-of beauty as this. "Despert weather it's been. Ah don't know 'at iver I heerd tell o' more damage done at one time i' my life. T' papers is full o' nowt but disaster—disaster by sea, an' disaster by land. Ah reckon it's been as bad aboot here as anywhere. They say there's ower thirty wrecks lyin' ashore atween Shields an' Scarborough, an' more ships missin' nor folks knows on yet. Did ya hear tell 'at Ah'd seen a vessel go doon mysel' night afore last?"

"You saw it?" asked Genevieve, turning paler and looking out to the dark horizon where the sea was still heaving under the frowning heavens.

"Ay, Ah saw it, an', so far as Ah know, nobody else saw it. She turned ower all of a sudden, an' came up again bottom upward, parted clean i' two, like a 'bacca pipe. Then

she disappeared, an' there wasn't as much as a spar left floatin' 'at Ah could see ; but 'twas gettin' on for nightfall. Ah'd been out all t' daäy. Ah niver can rest i' t' house wi' t' signals firin' an' t' rockets roarin' i' that waäy. Ah watched the savin' o' three ships' crews fra the top o' Swarthcliff Nab that day ; an' Ah helped a bit i' savin' other two."

"Were they saved by the lifeboat?" Genevieve asked.

"Some by t' boat, an' some by t' life-lines," answered Mr. Crudas. "There was a woman fetched ashore i' the cradle, poor thing ! ower such a boilin', ragin' sea as Ah reckon you niver saw. She was the last but one te leave the ship. She stuck tiv her husband—he was t' master, an' he stuck tiv his vessel till all t' rest o' t' crew was saäfe. Then t' line wi' t' cradle an' t' life-buoy was shot oot again, an' just as t' poor fellow seemed to be puttin' one foot into t' cradle, he was blawn clean owerboard,—eh, but it was an awful minute that ! There warn't a shadow of a chance i' such a sea. He battled aboot a bit ; sometimes one could see him, an' sometimes one couldn't, tho' he was nobbut a few yards fra



t' shore. I heerd a cry, a terrible cry; it's i' my ears yet; but whether it was the drownin' man or his wife, Ah don't know to this minute. They said she saw him go."

"And all this was just here, and we did not know!" said Genevieve. "I thought I heard a gun once in the night; but I did not know what it meant."

The girl stopped. She was growing paler and paler as her keen susceptibility was wrought upon more deeply by the thought of the seeming carelessness and indifference in which she had been living through the storm. The idea of sitting in safety, in warmth, in unappreciated security, while men were crying their last agonizing cries within sight of the place where she sat, was almost intolerable. It seemed as if she had wronged those who had suffered of their due sympathy in failing to suffer with them so far as she might have done. It was as if she heard a voice in the wild wind—a voice asking, "Could ye not watch with Me one hour?" Then the wind fell a little, and the voice seemed to say, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to these, ye did it not to Me."

They were nearly at their journey's end now. The dark clouds were drifting upward from the sea; the sun was hidden; the distant moorland was changing from grey to purple-black.

"Ah doobt t' daäy's goin' to worsen' on't," said Ishmael Crudas as they entered Kirk-gate, the main street of the townlet. Ishmael turned to go his own way, which branched off a little farther down the street, shouting "Good daäy" to Miss Craven and Genevieve as he went. There was a strange gloomy look upon the face of the houses; the piled-up snow on either side of the street looked dirty and distressful; the people were hurrying about—more people than Genevieve had seen in Thurkeld Abbas before; and it soon became evident that some common cause was making common stir.

"You know where the Bank is?" said Miss Craven, as they stopped at the Richmond Arms. "An' what are you going to do till I'm ready? Hadn't I better call for you at the Rectory?"

"Yes, thank you; if you will be so kind," said Genevieve. She still looked sad and

thought-burdened as she turned to go down the narrow street where the Bank was. Marishes Lane was the name of it, and Marishes Lane was the most silent and deserted street in all the place, as a rule. To-day a throng of people were coming swiftly down, talking rapidly, earnestly as they came, and looking into each other's faces with concern and dread.

"Has anything happened?" Genevieve asked of a tall woman who seemed to be trying to cheer a shorter woman who clung weeping to her arm.

"Ay, miss, there's anuff happened, if it's true what folks say," answered the woman in tones of pain and excitement. "There's a ship i' distress just down i' the Bight here, an' they say it's the *Viking*; an' if it is, my sister's little boy's aboard—little Davy Drewe. An' it's nobbut his second voyage, poor bairn! An' he is a bonny little lad, miss, an' sharp as a bree.\* But don't take on so yet, Ailsie. Wait an' see. God's been good to thee so far. Don't take on so till tha knows the worst."

Genevieve had turned, for the women still

\* Bree—briar.

hurried on as the tall one spoke. The younger one, hardly knowing what she did in the sudden bewilderment of her grief, put out her hand to Genevieve, who took it warmly between her own. She could think of few words that held any comfort, and these few were difficult to utter in the strong wind that seemed to be growing stronger every moment. When the little town was left behind, as it was before Genevieve became aware of the fact, there was no protection. The blast swept the wild-looking scene, bending the leafless trees; driving the untrodden snow over the cliffs in steamy clouds; blowing through the thin garments of the women, who were hurrying in groups along the bleak white road that led down into Soulsgrif Bight. "Come wi' ma, come wi' ma!" the younger woman entreated when Genevieve paused once in the lane. "Come wi' ma, and see the last o' my little lad!"

And again it seemed to Genevieve that there was a voice in the blast that went sweeping by.

## CHAPTER XIV.

“WHO EVER LOVED THAT LOVED NOT AT FIRST  
SIGHT ? ”

“At length I saw a lady within call,  
Stillier than chisell'd marble, standing there;  
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,  
And most divinely fair.”

TENNYSON, *A Dream of Fair Women*.

THE scene in Soulsgrif Bight disclosed itself quite suddenly from the turn at the top of the cliff. It was a wild scene, and impressive; and the sounds that dulled and deadened the hearing were at least as impressive as the sight itself.

The houses which composed the little fishing hamlet at the foot of the cliff were ranged somewhat after the fashion of an irregular semicircle. Some had stood on the very fringe of the sea; these were wrecked for the

most part; and you saw figures moving through and beyond the slanting rafters that had held the roof.

Others stood dotted about on ledges of rock, on rugged and hardly approachable points, the cliffs having in some instances fallen away on every side, and left the red-tiled dwelling on a rocky islet in the midst of rocks. Some few were ranged together on a shelf at the back of the bay, and on the slope in front there were upturned boats, masts, and oars, the wrecks of lost ships, and other pathetic vestiges of lost lives.

Few details were noticed by Genevieve as she went down Soulsgrif Bank, still holding the hand of the woman who was silently weeping. The Bight seemed to be rapidly filling with swift-moving, apprehensive figures. Some came from the north, some from the south, some were going down with Genevieve and the fear-driven women, who seemed to look to her, if not for help, then, at least, for all the sympathy she had to give. There was an excitement, suppressed as yet, on every countenance; and every eye was turned strainingly seaward.

At present this seaward view was suggestive only of terror—of angry and awful power. The dark clouds were obscured; so, too, was the darkly-heaving distance of the sea. Mystery was the key-note of the scene, the mystery of driving storm-scud—scud of rain or snow meeting and mingling with the scud of riven, flying surf. The only light in it was a heavy, lurid, yellow light, that appeared to be neither of sun, nor moon, nor stars—a light that seemed to strike upward from the torn sea, rather than downward from the troubled heavens.

Down at the bottom of the narrow rock-bounded road a dozen or more of the fisher-folk of the place gathered instantly about the strange little group of three. It did not seem strange; nothing was strange save the awful booming of the sea all along the foot of the cliffs, the wild roaring and lashing, the mad bursting and tossing of the waves that stretched in broken heights and shadowy depths across the Bight from Briscoe Point to Soulsgrif Ness. What roar was of the water, and what of the rushing mighty wind, could not be discerned. The sole sound that

had distinction there was the shrill crying of the myriad seagulls that had their home in the rocks to the north. For Genevieve Bartholomew there was an added terror in their defiant scream which every now and then subsided into a mocking chuckle as the birds passed boldly near. It was as if some malevolent storm-spirit swept by on its wicked wing.

The two women with whom Genevieve had come down from Thurkeld Abbas were the daughters of a drowned man, the widows of drowned men, the sisters of drowned men. All they possessed—the means of life itself—had come to them from the sea; the self-same sea had taken from them all that made life worth having. Ailsie Drewe would have said “nearly all” a day or two before, believing that her boy was safe on board the *Viking*, then, as she supposed, taking in coal at Newcastle for Dieppe.

The news that a schooner, believed to be the *Viking*, had been seen drifting past Briscoe Point, disabled and dismasted, was the first news that the poor woman had had of the sailing of the ship. She knew at once



that it must have sailed before the coming on of the storm. Where had it been during the awful days and nights of veering wind and changing, tempestuous sea, that it should now be drifting helplessly northward again?

More than one of the men assembled there had seen the hull of the disabled ship as it rolled and laboured past the point. The mainmast had snapped off a few feet from the deck; some three or four figures gathered about the bows was all that could be discerned through the darkness and mist of the edge of the snow-squall.

Two of the men on board—it was hoped they were on board—were Soulsgrif men. Their wives were there in the Bight, and their little children. One white-headed old man stood alone, covering his face at times with his sou'-wester while he prayed for the last son that the sea had left him. Had it left him? Was he there, midway between the frowning heavens and the angry sea? The old man was walking on, still alone, still praying, still keeping his eye fixed on the changing, threatening distance. Suddenly he heard a voice beside him, a gentle, sweet,

anxious voice trying to speak so that it could be heard above the storm.

“Have you seen the ship? Do you think it is there? Do you think it *can* be there?”

The old man turned, gazing surprisedly at the white, beautiful, eager face, the compassionate eyes before him. He had not heard, or had not understood, the questions. Were they in some strange tongue? Surely it was some message of peace which had been sent to him!

He was wondering silently; a man on horseback was dashing wildly down a steep path between the rocks. The latter stopped rather suddenly as Genevieve was repeating her question in a louder and more deliberate way. She had not noticed him till he drew up.

For a moment he sat silent in the saddle, as if he too were half-bewildered by the tall, white, fur-clad figure, the wind-blown masses of rippling golden hair, the pale, clear-cut face that was like a sculptor's dream, the dark, wistful eyes of the truest, deepest violet-colour he had ever in his many wanderings beheld. All against his will he was arrested

by the unconscious grace, the appealing glance, the intense compassion visible on the face so suddenly upturned to his.

The gentleman raised his hat. "I beg your pardon," he said. "You were asking about the ship. It is there; I have seen it from the moor." Then he turned to the old man. "Is anything known about the vessel in Soulsgrif Bight?" he asked of him.

The old fisherman's eyes filled with tears. He had heard what this clear, strong voice was saying. "I know 'at my son *was* aboard, sir," he said. "If he be aboard yet, him an' all 'at's wiv him 's despairin' o' their lives."

"There is no lifeboat here?" The question was put in quick, decisive tones.

"Noä, sir. An' if there was she couldn't live i' such a sea as this."

"Where is the nearest lifeboat station?"

"At yon end o' Swarthcliff Bay, sir; six miles to the south'ard. Ah thought they might mebbe ha' seen the vessel as she passed there, but Ah reckon she passed when one o' them snow-squalls was on, if she passed at all. But there's no sayin' where she's been such weather as this."

The stranger raised his hat as he dashed off again, then he crushed it down over a great square forehead contracted with pain, with strong resolution. His firm mouth was strenuously compressed; his large dark-brown eyes were lighted with the determination of effort, rather than with hope of that effort's success.

Genevieve looked after him, feeling as if some hope had gone with him, some help and strength. Certainly the cold wind was colder, the dark heavens darker; surely the white snow-flakes that were beginning to sweep upward from the sea, swept in more pensive accord with human loss and loneliness than ever snow had swept before.

"Do you know that gentleman's name?" she asked of the old man who still stood near.

"Noä, laädy; noä. Ah don't know what they call him. He'll be a stranger hereabouts, Ah reckon. He seems keen set o' something. God keep him fra harm an' ill!"

"Amen!" said the girl, audibly and reverently.

## CHAPTER XV.

## IN PERIL ON THE SEA.

“ Oh ! I have suffer'd  
With those that I saw suffer : a brave vessel,  
Who had no doubt some noble creature in her,  
Dash'd all to pieces.

SHAKESPEARE, *The Tempest*.

NEARLY an hour after the gentleman on horseback had passed swiftly through Soulsgrif Bight, and away up the cliff to the southward, there was a slight change in the aspect of things. The wind veered a little; the snow-storm began to clear away to the north.

Every eye in Soulsgrif Bight was fixed upon the riven lurid edge of the moving cloud.

It went on moving, moving over sullen, dark, blue-black waters fretted with leaping

tongues of white foam, tongues that leapt hungrily one upon another because nothing else was there for them to leap upon. There was nothing else from Briscoe Point to the riven cloud-edge that went on moving away.

Even above the desperate thunder and boom of the sea you could hear, or perhaps feel, the low ground-tone of despair that came from the hearts of the people standing there.

More than three parts of the wild, wide bay was clear now, clear and cold as blue steel; but no dismasted hull rose darkly between sea and sky.

Some there could have prayed that the cloud might stay now, that its merciful obscurity might rest upon the little space that was left between its ragged edge and Soulsgrif Ness, as once the cloud rested upon the camp of Israel. But it moved onward; it swept past the Ness.

From point to point there was nothing for the eye to see save the great strife of waters, nothing for the ear to hear but the war of the unabating tempest.

Genevieve Bartholomew, with the fear-

lessness of ignorance, went farther along the beach to where some large masses of fallen rock were lying under the cliff. Two of the aged fishermen, who had turned their backs to the sea, and were standing with pathetic lines of hopelessness about their mouths, with sad, strange recognition of the worst in their eyes, gave her a word of warning as she passed.

“Don’t goä ower far that way, miss. T’ tide’s risin’. When it touches yon steän, the Kirkmaister’s Steän, they call it, it’s dangerous comin’ back.”

“Is it? Thank you. I shall not stay,” the girl shouted through the roar. “I want to see if I can see anything from that ledge. I am afraid you will think me foolish, but I did think that I saw something just now. There! I saw it again. A black speck on the water!”

The men turned swiftly, something in the girl’s eager hopefulness of manner striking chords of responsive hopefulness in them.

There was nothing to be seen; but they knew well that so small a thing as a piece of wreck, or even a boat, might show itself

for one moment and then hide itself for many in such a mountainous sea as that. They hurried away to where a group of people were gathering round a woman who had doubtless been made a widow since that snow-squall burst upon the bay. There was a man with a glass in the crowd, and at the first sign he turned to sweep the angry water in which it seemed so little likely that anything could be and live.

Yet not one full minute had passed when the cry, half-glad, half-full of anguish, swept across the Bight: "They've ta'en to the boat! God help them! they've ta'en to the boat!"

For the moment every one had seen it for themselves. Away beyond the seething, desperate, madly-plunging surf a vast ridge of water had risen slowly, bearing on its unbroken crest a tiny boat with six dark figures visible against the cold, clear sky. "Heaven help 'em!" said the man who had been watching them through the glass. "Heaven help 'em! There's some on 'em stripped to swim."

Even as he spoke the boat disappeared.



A great white crest with a flying mane swept up between, seeming as if it broke into the blue ether that was changing to green. There was no murmur in the crowd, no cry; only a breathless, heart-swelling silence.

Could nothing be done—nothing, nothing? It seemed to Genevieve as if no one asked the question. She did not know as they did that in such a sea as that the question was an idle one. The probability was that the boat would never reach the broken surf: if it did its buffeting would soon end.

“An’ it’s hard to perish within sight o’ the reek o’ your own chimna,” said a lame man who passed on crutches. Only a year before he had been washed ashore, senseless, stunned, and maimed by the wreckage of the ship he had sailed in all his life.

Genevieve, mindful of the warning that she had received, went upward toward a nearer ledge of rock, which seemed to offer even better chances of observation. No one noticed her now, every face being turned seaward, waiting for another glimpse of the boat, if it might so be that another glimpse was to be had.

None knew better than the simple fisher-folk of Soulsgrif Bight that the extremity could never come that should find God's arm so shortened that it *could not* save. Some prayed silently, some aloud; some prayed, not knowing it was prayer they offered. Miracles had been wrought in Soulsgrif Bight; and doubtless miracles would be wrought there again. Why not now?

Suddenly, very suddenly, the painful, breathless silence was broken. A woman looking southward saw on the snow-covered cliff-top some object looming, towering greatly against the sky. A crowd of toiling people were all about it; horses were being moved hither and thither; ropes were being thrown and coiled and bound.

"My God! my God!" said the woman who had been praying passionately for her husband's life. "My God! it's the LIFEBOAT!"

Even so; it was the lifeboat.

Knowing that no boat that ever was built could round Briscoe Point in such a tempest as that, the captain at the coastguard station had refused to launch the lifeboat, to sacrifice almost certainly the lives of thirteen

brave men. It was painful to make the refusal, but even as he made it a thought struck him.

"I cannot launch her here, Mr. Kirkoswald," he said to the gentleman who had ridden in hot haste from Soulsgrif Bight. "She would never round the point. But if it were possible to get her overland through the snow she might be launched in the Bight."

"Then for Christ's sake let us try! There are supposed to be six men and a lad in the foundering ship."

So the trial was made; and the day and the deed will live, as brave deeds have lived in England always. The children of children yet unborn will tell of the cutting of the frozen and deeply-drifted snow over hills and through hollows for six long miles; the painful dragging, step by step, of the massively-built boat, mounted on her own carriage, by men who wrought in silence, in utter obedience, in splendid willingness, with desperate resolve.

"If you will take command of the men who work on the road, Mr. Kirkoswald, the

coxswain and I will see to the boat," said the captain of the coastguard to the stranger, who was working already with spade and mattock in the snow. His horse had been harnessed to the boat's carriage; but it had to be unharnessed, as its owner needed it for the new service that was required of him. It was difficult service, and important; but he was equal to the task, and men who might not speak aloud spoke softly, saying always to themselves, "Well done!"

Men and horses from well-nigh every farm on the road joined the band of volunteers; the men working with such a will as they had never in their lifetime brought to any labour of their own. Massive snow-drifts disappeared, hewn away in heavy blocks; the horses strove in the shafts—as many as eighteen being yoked at one time in places where the road was steep, or the snow imperfectly cleared. No difficulty stopped or stayed this little force of brave Yorkshiremen, as they struggled forward and ever forward on their merciful errand. Even the men who knew that for them the worst was yet to come, the braving of the terrible sea

after the terrible toil on land, even they spared not themselves; no, not even when the lifeboat stood on the top of Briscoe Bank, and was seen towering there by eyes that could only see through tears; welcomed by voices whose words of greeting were choked and overpowered by sobs. Strong men wept as the ringing cheers at length passed upward through the deafening roar of wind and wave; but their weeping had to be brief. The end was not yet.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### COMIN' THROUGH THE SPRAY.

“ Then, do you know, her face looked down on me  
With a look that placed a crown on me.”

BROWNING, *The Flight of the Duchess*.

THE day was passing on, the tide was rising, the awful foam-white walls of sea that were rearing and dashing in Soulsgrif Bight were growing more appalling in their dread tempestuousness with every hour that went by. The spray of the waves that struck the foot of the cliff flew upward in curling, twisting columns, the lighter masses staining the white snow on the cliff-tops, the heavier falling back and mingling with the flying surf that was obscuring all sight of the rugged blackness of the rocks at the back of the Bight.

The little boat with the shipwrecked crew was still there, tossing outside the breakers. It could be seen from time to time for a few seconds. When it had been first seen, six figures had been visible against the clear cold glare beyond. "Then my little lad isn't there!" said Ailsie Drewe with quivering lips and blinded eyes; and from that time Ailsie had nothing more to say. But she still stood there, braving the cold, and the snow, and the cruel showers of hail.

Near five hours had gone by between the sighting of the dismasted ship and the sudden looming of the lifeboat on the top of Briscoe Bank, but it was only three hours since George Kirkoswald and his Bevis had ridden into the coastguard station at Swarthcliff.

Swiftly, silently, yet with terrible difficulty, the boat was lowered down Brisco Bank by means of ropes. When it touched the sands of the Bight there was a burst of strong, subdued, yet almost overpowering emotion. Tears, sobs, prayers, broken words of hope and consolation, revealings of long-suppressed affection, warm claspings of hands that had never touched in friendship before—this was

the choral music of humanity set to wild accompaniments of storm-wind, and the deep full bass of the furious wave.

Swiftly, and as silently as might be, the lifeboat was manned, the brave sea-soldiers buckled on their buoyant armour, set their pale-blue lances athwart the rest, and turned to face the foe with hearts as brave, as disdainful of danger, as any that ever beat in the breasts of the chivalrous knights of ancient repute. Chivalrous!

“ I do distrust the poet who discerns  
No character or glory in his times,  
And trundles back his soul five hundred years,  
Past moat and drawbridge, into a castle-court,  
To sing—oh, not of lizard, or of toad  
Alive i' the ditch there—'twere excusable;  
But of some black chief, half knight, half sheep-lifter.”

If Homer had seen Ulysses and his men launching a nineteenth-century lifeboat straight out into the very middle of the breakers that surge and dash upon the North Sea coast during a hurricane, we had had another epic to set our hearts a-beating to its diviner theme.

George Kirkoswald was a poet, not quite



mute, not quite inglorious, but it was hardly to be expected of him that he should see the poetry of that day's deed while his best strength was set to help the doing of it. For a long while after the launching of the lifeboat he saw nothing but the desperate strife it had. No eye there saw aught save the boat, its swift forward leaping, its downward plunge into the trough of the sea, its perilous uplifting and suspension on the curling crest of the mountainous wave, its perpendicular rearing as it rose, its dread descent as it fell, its human reel and shudder under the shock of a mighty blow, its sad submission to the drenching, bursting wave that half-filled the hollow between its planks, the swaying, the rocking, the tossing, the threatening, the hard, strong, desperate striving,—how should any eye turn from the appalling fascination of a scene like that?

Genevieve Bartholomew saw it all, not knowing how she dared to see, not knowing or dreaming what she might yet see. For her the scene was as strange, as utterly unimagined, as it was touching and overwhelming. She was still alone, still on the sloping

ledge of shale where the rock curved a little to the southward. She was utterly heedless—a native of the place would have said reckless—of the waves that were hissing below her, seething at her very feet, sending flying showers of spray all about her. How could she fear a few flakes of foam in such an hour as that, when men were fearing not to risk their lives, fearing not to face death at such odds as these?

She was not saying these things to herself; she had forgotten herself altogether. She had no thought but for the safety of the souls there in peril—the lifeboat crew, and the crew of that lesser boat which every now and then came into sight for a second or two, and then disappeared in a way that sent a thrill through the girl's whole being, suspending every faculty of life with dread and pain. More than once she had to turn and hold by the rocks behind her for support when the *aura* of fear had passed over her; it seemed to leave her strengthless, and this was a new sensation. It never occurred to her that exposure, need of food, keen anxiety, could have much effect of any kind.

Still she stood there in the curving of the rock, a little sheltered from the wind, and a little sheltered from observation. The surf was still flying about her; it began to fall more and more heavily; and at last the edge of a wave burst upon her with some force. This was awakening. Turning to retrace her steps, she saw with a sudden sinking and sickening of heart that the yellow, yeasty waves were tossing the long tangle of the very stones she had passed over—it seemed to her only a few minutes before.

Was it impossible to reach the sands?

Another daring greedy wave, another thud against the perpendicular wall of rock, another clash of the recoiling wave and the advancing one, another cloud of heavy spray,—these things made answer.

She was standing there, holding by the jagged edge of the rock. She afterward remembered looking up at it, noting its curious linear fractures, its manifold tints of black and green, of russet and blue, of various brown and amber; she remembered distinctly the thought that it might be the last thing her sight would rest upon.

Presently she closed her eyes, praying for deliverance, if deliverance might be. If not . . .

There was naught to be heard through the roar of the storm. There was a smothered cry down on the beach by the water's edge where the people had gathered after the life-boat had been launched. Genevieve did not hear it. She had been standing farther forward by the angle of the jutting rock when she discovered her danger. She could be seen as she stood there, a tall, white figure against the black rock; and Ailsie Drewe had been the first to see her—the first to raise that startled cry of dismay.

It could only be a few seconds that elapsed before Genevieve was conscious of a dark form dashing through the white whirl of spray, of a strong arm thrown round her, holding her firmly through a fierce shock, a drenching, blinding shock of water. Then she knew herself, lifted, borne on. . . . For a little while she knew no more.

It was a very little while, not more than a minute or so; she doubted, indeed, if consciousness had ever really left her, it grew

suddenly so quick, so keen, so full of shame, so full of gratitude. All at once she was herself again as she stood there surrounded by the little group of helpful women who had left the crowd—she hardly saw them in that first moment. Her eyes were lifted to the face of the man who had risked his life for her life. It was only a look she gave, no word, but it repaid him—he knew that on the instant; it repaid him a thousandfold.

The day was eventful, but that one look was the event of the day for him.

“You will come with me?” he said authoritatively. He was always authoritative; always most courteously commanding in his manner. He drew Genevieve’s arm within his own, made it rest there, accommodated his movement to hers, and went up the beach to the little inn with quite ordinary gravity and composure. There was a fire blazing, provision made for any half-drowned man who might reach the shore, a woman waiting to do what might be done. She was rather amused than concerned by the brief history of the lady’s drenching that Kirkoswald gave.

"Strange foälks doän't understand, ya see," she said, removing Genevieve's dripping fur paletot, and the little white fur cap with its limp feathers. "They don't understand; an' Ah've seen 'em that ventursome 'at Ah've been fair 'mazed. But all's well 'at ends well; an' Ah reckon you're nut much woss, miss, by t' leuk o' ya?"

"Thank you, I am not any worse myself," said Genevieve, glancing at the dark, wet figure beside her, who stood watching her with quiet concern.

"You'll be thinkin' o' yer cloäk," the garrulous woman went on. "Ah's frightened mysel' 'at it'll dry rather hask,\* wi' t' saut water, an' it'll be a pity. It's a bit o' bonny graithin',† if 'tis rether kenspac;‡ but it becomes ye well. Ah said so to Marget this mornin'."

Genevieve listened in amusement. George Kirkoswald was turning away; his work outside was not yet done.

"I will come back presently," he said.

\* Hask—harsh, unyielding.

† Graithing—clothes, household goods, etc.

‡ Kenspac—conspicuous, too easily recognized.

“Meantime you will have something to eat, please ; and you will oblige me by remaining here until I can arrange for your return to Murk-Marishes.”

Genevieve looked up with a quick blush. He knew her then, or, at any rate, he knew something about her. Was he aware that she had left Miss Craven, who would be both perplexed and angry, at Thurkeld Abbas ? Did he know that she had a father, who would at least be anxious ? Did he understand how she had come there ; how she had longed to be at hand to offer sympathy, to be of use, to tend and help others rather than be tended herself ? Could he comprehend her disappointment and humiliation ? All this was behind that one glance that George Kirkoswald answered with a smile as he went out. It was the smile of a man who smiled rarely, and it was strangely moving, strangely sweet for a face so strong and sad.

It passed from his face very quickly. The little door of the inn opened straight on to the low quay. As he went out he saw quite distinctly the lifeboat struck by the heaviest

sea she had encountered yet. It fell like an avalanche, well-nigh swamping the boat, and breaking six of her oars. "They snapped like straws," said one of the men afterward, a man whose arm had been disabled by the same stroke. Two other men were hurt; the boat was not manageable against the wind; there was nothing for it but to turn back for reinforcements of men and oars. A whole hour's rowing at full strength in such a sea as that had exhausted the powers of the lifeboat crew to a considerable extent, and it had been fruitless.

A low sound that was half a cry passed through the crowd when it was made clear what had happened. The storm was still raging with its wildest fury. The little boat was still in sight. Six long hours it had tossed there between Briscoe Point and Soulsgrif Ness.



## CHAPTER XVII.

“SIT STILL AND HEAR THE LAST OF OUR  
SEA SORROW.”

“Love’s not a flower that grows in the dull earth,  
Springs by the calendar ; must wait for sun,  
For rain ; matures by parts—must take its time  
To stem, to leaf, to bud, to blow ; it owns  
A richer soil, and boasts a quicker seed !  
You look for it, and see it not, and lo !  
E’en while you look, the peerless flower is up,  
Consummate in the birth !”

KNOWLES.

GENEVIEVE, watching from the inn window, could see all that was happening out there in the infuriate storm. Another snow-squall was looming and threatening in the distance ; the coxswain of the lifeboat was calling out for fresh hands—they were there with fresh oars, all waiting ready. Among those who

put on the cork jacket for the second attempt George Kirkoswald was foremost. Was it a fancy, or did he really glance up from under those heavy frowning brows of his toward the window of the little inn?

Another moment and they were out again in the great white upheaving world of water. It seemed as if the roar of the gale were rising to a shriek as the squall came on. The mingled sleet came down, rain and snow one minute, rain and stinging hail another. You looked, and the lifeboat was visible through the slanting scud, leaping, plunging, quivering; the men bending forward on the thwarts under the deluge that was pouring over them, clinging for very life. Again you looked, and there was neither boat nor men to save, neither boat nor men to be saved. All was rage, dread, white fury, black despair.

For an hour, a whole long hour, that seemed as ten, Genevieve stood there by the window. The childish sense of wrong-doing that had haunted her all day was gone now. Everything was gone but one strong desire.

She would not have said it to herself, she

would not have dared to say that one man's life was more than another; but it was one man's face that came before her when she prayed, one man's voice that rose above the others when the cry of drowning men seemed to her tensely strung nerves to come mingled with every shriek of the gale.

At last, through a break in the thick, yellow-grey mystery, it was seen that the lifeboat was being rapidly driven shoreward again. Another minute and it was seen that she had more than her crew on board.

No voice was heard in that suspense. If any spoke, even to God, he spoke silently.

Not till the lifeboat actually touched the beach, slanting downward on a seething wave, did the cry reach the shore—

“ALL SAVED!”

Across the Bight it flew, amid the roaring and rattling of the hurricane.

“All saved! all saved! all saved!”

Genevieve heard it. She ran out from the little inn, down the half-dozen steps of the quay, away over the wet, shingly slope. The old man to whom she had spoken first when she came down to the Bight was there. He

took her hand and pressed it, tears were streaming down his furrowed face.

"Oh, my honey!" he exclaimed, "they're saved! they're saved! It's a mericle! a mericle! as much a mericle as if they'd been rose fra the dead!"

"Ay!" said another ancient mariner, "A/niver thowt te live te see the daäy when a boät 'ud be built te swim in a sea like that!"

Some of the people made way for the young lady who had stayed with them so long, and sympathized with them so keenly. Words of hers, comforting, consoling, had been passed about from lip to lip during the day; and her kind face and unassuming ways had opened hearts that were not opened too easily. Though she never came into Soulsgrif Bight again she would not be forgotten there.

She saw the one figure she desired to see; he was helping to lift the rescued men out of the lifeboat—pale, helpless, exhausted men who could not even look their gladness or their gratitude. One was lying back with closed eyes, another had torn hands, torn with clinging to the little boat, but they were too much frozen to bleed. Another had a

broken arm, which hung down when he was lifted.

Ailsie Drewe's little lad had been lifted out almost first, lifted into his mother's arms, but he lay there quite stirlessly. There was no sign of returning consciousness as he was carried home; no sign when he was laid on the sofa by his mother's fire. Genevieve had left the beach with those who had carried him. She was there in the cottage helping others to chafe the frozen limbs that had been covered quickly with hot blankets; helping, too, to keep up the mother's fainting hope.

"The child breathes—he breathes quite naturally," she said, bending over the wet, yellow curls to kiss him as he lay. He was only a little fellow for his years, and he looked so fair and sweet in his death-like pallor that she could not help but kiss him. In after days Ailsie used to tell him, smiling sadly as she said it, that a lady's kiss had kissed him back to life. Certainly it was strange that his blue eyes should uncloze just as the kiss was given. He looked up, at first vacantly, then, as his eyes met his mother's, with recognition. But they were very heavy eyes, and they soon

closed again. Was the lad remembering how and where they had closed last?

There was a tale to be told; and by-and-by a gentleman came in, hoping that he might be there when the boy told it. Perhaps he had also another hope.

"I trusted that you would be here, Miss Bartholomew," he said. "I have taken the liberty of sending to the Richmond Arms for a cab; it will be here presently."

"Thank you," Genevieve said, feeling again a confused sense of wrong-doing; a still more confused sense of wonder as to what this stranger was thinking of her.

"I must explain to you," she said. "I came to Thurkeld Abbas with Miss Craven this morning, and I promised to wait for her at the Rectory. . . ."

"Instead of which you ran away?"

"Yes," replied Genevieve with a sudden smile, perceiving quickly that she had no need to fear misconstruction. "Yes; I suppose it might be put that way."

"I think you ought to look sorry."

"Don't I look sorry? I should say then that must be because I look afraid. I believe

I am very much afraid of what Miss Craven will say. It is so late; it will be dark very soon."

"Don't be apprehensive," said Mr. Kirkoswald, changing his tone to one of greater kindness. "I will see you safely home, if you will allow me; and after that I can easily take care that Miss Craven comes to no harm that I can avert. I shall go back by the moor."

Again Genevieve looked up with the sudden inquiry in her eyes that had amused him so much before; but his instinctive courtesy was stronger than his amusement.

"If you do not know my name I ought to tell it to you," he said. "It is George Kirkoswald, and I live at Usselby Crag; therefore I have the pleasure to be your neighbour."

"Thank you," Genevieve said; "I did not know." To herself she added, "And yet I think I did—I think I have known it all day since that first moment."

All day! It was only a fragment of a day in truth, and yet it was half a lifetime.

Surely if she had never seen this man before, then he was one whom she had long

desired to see; she had heard of him, or read of him, until the impression had been made, that he had to-day confirmed. It was he who had mingled with all her past inner history; it was he about whom all that was best and highest in her estimate of humanity had gathered; it was he to whom she had turned for guidance when thought was confused, for help when knowledge was darkened, for support and sympathy when the days were heavy with unsuspected burdens. He had been part of her past life, as certainly as he was part of the present; and her future was bound to his, though she should never see the greatness and the goodness that was in him looking down from his eyes into hers again till her life should end.

She hardly thought consciously of the deeds he had done that day as she stood there. They were only a part of himself; and being himself he could have done no other. Yet doubtless the acts had disclosed the man more plainly than years of uneventful intercourse would have done. And it was not only the thing done, the manner of doing it made evidence also; and there was no



touch there to mar the fine consistency of the impression.

There was a lighter feeling in the cottage by this time; the little lad was sitting up, leaning against a pillow and sipping some tea. Rough, uncomely faces moved smilingly across the firelight. Ailsie looked pale as she sat by the sofa. She was rocking herself to and fro, as if the weight of dread and sorrow were loth to leave her, and full deliverance hard to recognize. She was not ungrateful, poor woman, but her gratitude lay trembling under dread possibilities, awaiting a freer moment for expression.

Presently the boy spoke, and his mother bent over him.

"Yon's him 'at pulled me oot o' the water," he said in a faint voice, and indicating Mr. Kirkoswald as he spoke.

"Yes : and it was more of a pull than anybody would think to look at you now, my man," said George, coming to the side of the little patchwork-covered sofa, and stroking the yellow curls that yet had the salt seawater in them. "I want you to tell me how you came to be in the water. Your captain

says there must have been a mistake somewhere. I have heard his account, which is puzzling."

"'Twas my oän fault—at first," said the cabin-boy.

"So it seems. Captain Unwin expected that he was the last to leave the ship—he says that he could hardly see through the spray and foam who was in the boat, and who was not. Then, just as he was about to cut the rope he saw you on the deck of the hull, and called to you as loud as he could to look sharp, instead of which you cast the boat adrift, to the dismay of everybody in it. The captain thinks you must have known that they had not the smallest chance of getting near the wreck again to take you off."

The little lad looked pale, his lip quivered, a tear or two gathered on his eyelids.

"The captain said that?" Davy asked.  
 "He said he shouted 'Leuk sharp'?"

"Yes; what did you think he shouted?"

"Ah thowt he said, 'Let go the rope!'"

"And you let it go?"

"Ay, sir: Ah let it go."

There was a silence in the little cottage.

The lad's simple, heroic obedience — obedience to a command which, as he heard it, must in its very horror and cruelty have struck him with a sudden bewilderment — was too great and grand a thing for spoken praise. A sob broke the silence; it was not Miss Bartholomew who was sobbing. Her face was white and tense, but there was a smile on it.

“What did you think when you saw the boat drifting away?” she asked of the cabin-boy.

“Ah didn't think nothin', miss.”

“His not to make reply,  
His not to reason why,  
His but to do and die,”

quoted George Kirkoswald with a light in his grave eyes.

“And now tell me what you meant when you said it was your own fault?” asked Kirkoswald.

“I meant 'twas my oän fault for goin' doon below when they were gettin' ready to leave the ship.”

“Then why did you go?”

“For the mate's pictur'. . . . He didn't

tell me; but Ah knowed he'd miss it. 'Twas his wife's 'at's just dead a month sen."

"And you went below to get that?"

"Ay, and Ah got it, an' Ah kept it a bit after Ah was i' the water. But it got washed oot o' my belt."

"How long did you stick to the wreck after the boat had drifted away?"

"A good bit—an hour mebbe. Then she began to go doon, starn foremost, an' Ah fastened myself to the life-buoy—the captain told me te stick te that buoy a long time before, when the masts went by the boärd.—Then Ah jumped off fra the bow, an' tried te swim to the boät, but t' sea were ower heavy."

That was all that Davy Drewe had to tell. George Kirkoswald knew the rest. He had called the attention of the coxswain to something floating on the water before they reached the little boat; and that something had proved to be the widow's one son, tossing there in the storm-swept sea, exhausted, half-frozen, yet fighting even then for the young life that was in him.

Davy's tale was hardly told, when a neigh-

bour came with the startling news that a carriage with two horses was to be seen "in the street." No one there had ever seen a carriage in Soulsgrif Bight—there was not a horse in the place, nor was there a road that any ordinary animal could be expected to climb.

"Since it is impossible the cab should come to you, I fear you must go to the cab," said Mr. Kirkoswald. Genevieve was putting on her cloak and hat, the women were helping her, thanking her. Davy Drewe was looking at her with childishly open admiration.

"Will you come an' see me again?" he asked, holding out his small frost-stiffened hand.

"Yes; I will indeed," she said. "We ought to be friends. This gentleman has saved two lives to-day—your life and my life. . . . We must remember that, Davy."

"Were you goin' to be drooned?"

"Yes," interposed George Kirkoswald; "Miss Bartholomew ran some risk of being drowned because of her anxiety to see that you were saved."

"You'll be thinkin' Ah'm a thankless

woman, sir," said Ailsie Drewe, when Mr. Kirkoswald offered her his hand at parting. "But it's noan thanklessness; it's nut knowin' what te saäy, nor how te saäy it. Ah, feel as if Ah'd like te lay down my life for you, if so 'twere to be 'at you wanted it."

"Then that is certainly not thanklessness," said Mr. Kirkoswald. Genevieve did not hear what other reassuring words he said. There was more knocking at the cottage door, more people coming in. Surely that was Miss Craven's bonnet! And quite as surely that was Mr. Severne's low-crowned clerical hat immediately behind it!

"Oh, I say! We simply thought you were lost, Miss Bartholomew," said the curate, pressing forward. "We've come down in a cab, Miss Craven and I; *the* cab—there isn't another in the district; and somebody else had ordered it, but it was coming down here, and we insisted on coming with it. Oh, really! Is that little boy ill?"

Explanations followed, interspersed with introductions, inquiries, disapprobations. Miss Craven was very austere, very determined that her displeasure should not be made light

of. She accepted Mr. Kirkoswald's politenesses as if they were justly her due, having an instant suspicion that he might be in some way to blame.

So much attentiveness to a quite unimportant stranger would be very likely to arise out of a sense of culpability. Then, fortunately, it occurred to her that in the eyes of a man of Mr. Kirkoswald's learning, the Cravens of Hunsgarth Haggs might not, after all, be such very unimportant people. He would know something of their ancient standing, and he would comprehend that though a family might come to be represented for all practical purposes by one unmarried woman, that family was still entitled in her person to such respect as would have been paid to it under more fortunate vicissitudes. This made matters plainer, Miss Craven's mood lighter, and the homeward journey certainly easier in consequence.

The darkness came down suddenly; the lamps were lighted in the streets at Thurkeld Abbas. Mr. Kirkoswald, who had been riding on before the cab, stopped at the Richmond Arms until Miss Craven came up

to ask whether he might not send his man over to take the trap up the snow-covered roads to Hunsgarth Hags in the morning. Miss Craven yielded to this, but not too readily. Some transferring of parcels took place; Mr. Severne shook hands with everybody, and went away, smiling, blushing in the dim lamplight. Something had delighted him, some other thing had perplexed him; but he was not very clear about his sensations as he went homeward. Mr. Kirkoswald was riding forward again, and he did not stop till he reached the stile by the cottage at Netherbank. He dismounted there.

"I may call to-morrow to inquire how you are?" he asked, walking by Genevieve's side along the frozen field-path. The wind was still boisterous; a few silver stars shone keenly out between the clouds. There were lights in the window of the little cottage.

"Thank you," said Genevieve, with unhesitating grace. "I shall be glad to see you; and my father will be glad to have an opportunity of thanking you. . . . You will not give him the opportunity now?"

"I am afraid I may not, thank you. I



must go up with Miss Craven, as the roads are so bad."

He waited a moment by the foot of the tiny flight of steps. Keturah opened the door with an exclamation. "Good night," said Genevieve gravely, standing a moment in the glow of the light that came from the kitchen fire. "Good night. . . . There are so many other things that ought to be said that I am unable to say any of them."

"I am glad you have not tried to say them," answered George Kirkoswald, with a deep intentness in his tone. "There are things that are much more permanently contenting to me unsaid."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### JULIET OR ELAINE ?

“Love at first sight is the surest love, and for this reason—that it does not depend upon any one merit or quality, but embraces in its view the whole being. That is the love which is likely to last—incomprehensible, indefinable, inarguable-about.”—SIR ARTHUR HELPS.

GENEVIEVE had spoken quite truly when she told Miss Richmond that she was not lonely. She had an active brain and active fingers. The tiny house needed careful and constant mindfulness; the study offered occupation; Keturah required a considerate supervision. Then, too, she had her piano, her embroidery; there were letters to be written, books to be read; for sympathy and society she had her father; for the solitary hours which she had always enjoyed there was the moor, the reedy marsh, or the wide sea-shore. “I wanted

nothing," the girl said to herself, "and yet it seems as if I had wanted all."

It was but natural that a day so eventful as that stormy day in Soulsgrif Bight should cause a great reversal and upheaval in the existing order of things, especially since that order had, undeniably, been of a simple and settled kind. It was almost inevitable that thought should linger on such a day; that thought should turn to reverie, and muse upon it; that musing should grow creative, and build upon it.

Juliet's musings on the balcony took form, and kindled into a guileless yet forceful confession of love, though not a hundred words of Romeo's had fallen upon her ear.

"Romeo, doff thy name,  
And for thy name, which is no part of thee,  
Take all myself!"

Elaine spoke less, and less passionately, in her first sudden love for Lancelot; but—

"All night long his face before her lived,

\* \* \* \* \*

Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full  
Of noble things, and held her from her sleep."

Genevieve's love resembled both these, and

it differed from both. It resembled them in suddenness, in completeness ; it differed from Juliet's in respect of impatience ; from Elaine's in respect of simple and beautiful self-abandonment.

Her nature was too rare, too fine and strong, to die for need of another nature ; but by reason of these very qualities her need of love once wakened would become the one passionate need of her life.

Her need of love ! It had never existed till now ; and now it was one with her need of an atmosphere for her soul to breathe in.

All day there was with her in the room a new light, a new strength, a new reason for living life at its very best.

It was a sunny day, clear and keen, and calm with the strange calmness that only comes after a wild sea-storm. The snow was still lying white upon the great sloping upland, under the clumps of dark fir-trees, over all the wide, low-lying land that stretched between the rugged slope and the sea.

Everything was still, so still that a footfall on the frozen field made echo enough in the little house to stir the pulse to quicker move-

ment. Genevieve was ashamed for her blush, when the door opened and Mr. Kirkoswald came in; afraid lest her heart's secret should blaze itself in the heart's colours on her face. How tall and strong he looked in that little room! He seemed to fill it with his impressiveness, with the finely careless dignity that he had when he moved and spoke.

"I see that it is a mere matter of courtesy to ask you how you are," he said, looking into her face with a grave and kind intentness. "Are you really no worse for all that you went through yesterday?"

"Thank you, no—not any worse," Genevieve replied. "I should like to have gone down to Soulsgrif Bight again to-day if I might. I wish so much to know how Davy Drewe is, and the others."

"They are all right—that is, as right as one could expect," replied Mr. Kirkoswald with compassion in his tone. "Poor Verrill couldn't have his broken arm set till this morning. He looks the worst of them all; but Dr. Seaton says he'll come round in time. Davy Drewe was sitting on a stool by the fire, whistling 'Sweet Dublin Bay,'

and cutting a model of the hull of the *Viking*. . . . But there! that is stupid of me! I was not to mention the model."

"I see!" said Genevieve, smiling. It was a dreamy, lingering smile that played about her beautiful mouth. Was she recognizing the human promptings by which this new-found friend was led? A little silence followed; it was as if her beauty were weaving a spell that a man might hardly dare to break unadvisedly.

Was it only her beauty? George Kirkoswald asked of himself as he sat there. Was it only that she made a picture as she sat before him with her faultless face, her crown of soft, shining, yellow hair, her deep, violet-grey eyes? She had on a dress of warm white serge; there was some lace round her throat, and a string or two of coral beads. No detail that went to the making of the whole escaped him; but he knew that for him the spell was in none of these. The face itself, lovely as it was, did but seem the human expression of some lovelier spiritual ideal.

Suddenly Genevieve recollected herself,

and a burning blush of self-accusation spread over her face and throat.

"Shall I tell my father that you are here?" she asked; "or will you go down to the studio?"

"Which would he prefer?"

"I don't know; I don't think he would care much; but I should like you to go down to the studio, if you will. I have been thinking," the girl said, speaking with her usual unconventional honesty—"I have been thinking that I should like to show you some of his work."

"And I have been wishing much that I might be permitted to see it," replied Mr. Kirkoswald, also speaking honestly.

They went out together, down through the leafless orchard. The twisted trunks of the trees were throwing long blue shadows across the snow; the old moss-green well was sprinkled with diamonds, the hedges were bright with scarlet rose-hips, a robin was swaying lightly up and down on a brown apple-twig. Far away beyond the snow-covered pasture lands you could see the dark blue-grey sweep of heaving waters.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### ART AND LIFE.

“The world is too much with us ; late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers :  
Little we see in Nature that is ours ;  
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !  
This sea that bares her bosom to the moon ;  
The winds that will be howling at all hours,  
And are up-gather'd now like sleeping flowers ;  
For this, for everything, we are out of tune ;  
It moves us not.”

WORDSWORTH.

THE door of the studio was open. Noel Bartholomew had heard voices, and he stood there quietly eager to welcome the man who had saved his daughter's life. He looked wan and tired ; and it seemed to Genevieve that his scant and ill-arranged grey hair was even greyer than she had believed it to be. He was, as usual, very grave and very calm.



His first words were, of course, words of gratitude. They were not many, and they were quietly said; but his emotion was apparent, even to the point of giving pain. This was only for a moment, however.

"It is an ill wind that blows nobody good," he said, recovering himself. "And I must not forget that I owe to yesterday's peril the pleasure of seeing you here to-day."

"I should, of course, have given myself the pleasure of coming sooner or later," said Kirkoswald. "I hope I don't interrupt your work by coming this afternoon?"

"On the contrary, you are doing it a service by preventing my working with a tired eye and a still more tired brain."

"I suppose most artists are tempted to do that?"

"I believe so; and I believe that the greater the unfitness for work the stronger the fascination of it, that is, of continuing it. It is so, at least, with me. It is easier to put my palette down in the middle of a successful morning's work than at the end of a doubtful day."

"That I think I can understand," said

Kirkoswald, who seemed to Genevieve to be listening with an interest that was as real as it was deferential. After a moment's pause he added, "I have often wished, when I have found myself standing before a picture that I have really cared for, that I might know something of the history of its creation."

"In many cases, perhaps in seven out of ten, the true history would disappoint you. Is not Browning's 'Andrea del Sarto' a revelation?"

"It is," said Kirkoswald, "a sad one. But the pictures of Lucrezia's face reveal things to me that are sadder far. Take Browning's poem, del Sarto's pictures, his wife's portrait, and you have as painful a soul's tragedy as you need want."

The walls of the studio were still decorated with unfinished paintings, with careless sketches, with masterly studies. On the easel there was a full-length figure. It was, as George Kirkoswald saw for himself, a beautiful-browed CEnone. The Judas had been put away out of sight, untouched since the day it had excited discussion.

Noel Bartholemew was somewhat surprised

by the insight and pertinence of his visitor's remarks.

"You paint yourself?" he asked, as they sat by the studio fire, in the midst of the glow of fine colour, of artistic ornament and suggestion that was everywhere in the place.

"No; on the contrary, I can't draw a straight line," was the reply. "But I have long been attracted towards art—half against my will in the first instance. I have been told that Byron had a great contempt for painting. I had no contempt, but a consummate indifference. A painted canvas seemed to me such an unreal thing. I know now that it was my own incapacity for recognizing the real, that is to say, the spiritual, the true real, when I saw it; my own inability to perceive the right connection between human life and human art."

"Then you are now altogether on the side of the artists?" said Genevieve. She was sitting opposite to George Kirkoswald, and her eyes met his. He saw that there was an intenser meaning in her question than it might seem to have.

He paused a moment before replying.

"Would you mind explaining to me more exactly what you mean?" he asked.

"First let me explain," interposed Mr. Bartholemew, with a quietly humorous smile that was more visible in his eyes than about his mouth. "My daughter has the misfortune to have inherited strongly Puritan tendencies, tendencies that have skipped over one generation if not two, and are now displaying themselves all the more strongly for the lapse. . . . Proceed, my dear; inform Mr. Kirkoswald that deep in your heart of hearts you believe all painting, all sculpture, all secular poetry and music to be so many snares of the Evil One."

There was a distinct silence. Genevieve's face was turned a little toward the fire, as if she were looking into it for some thought or word that she wanted.

"I am sure that your father has stated the case from the extremest point he could find to stand upon," said Mr. Kirkoswald, speaking in a tone that betrayed both his interest and his appreciation of the difficulty.

"So he has," said the girl, turning a grave

uplifted face toward him. "But I will not say that he has gone beyond the truth. I *dare not* say it, lest my words should come back upon me."

There was no smile now on the face of either listener; one face had a touch of surprise.

"Perhaps, if I may venture to say so, you are suspending your judgment at present?" Kirkoswald said.

"It has been in a state of suspense ever since I began to think at all, and I see no prospect of any conclusion to the matter. Lately, I have let it rest."

"Or, rather it has let you rest," said her father.

"Exactly. Coming to Murk-Marishes was the hoisting of a flag of truce."

"Which I suppose you do not consider equivalent to a declaration of peace?" inquired Kirkoswald.

"No, I do not," said Genevieve. Then she added more gravely, "I think that peace for me would mean the death of one of my two natures—the artistic, or what my father terms the Puritan. So far as I can tell, they

are both very much alive; though at present they have no reason for clashing."

"Then you have the misfortune to represent in your own person the two opposing parties?"

"Yes, I suppose so. I am very conscious of being torn two ways," said Genevieve.

"On the one hand by a love of beauty, on the other by a fear that your desire for things beautiful is not, from the highest standpoint of all, a legitimate desire?"

"Precisely," said Genevieve, looking up with some gratitude, some wonder in her eyes. "It is precisely that. I want what I think the whole civilized world is wanting, A RECONCILER!"

"To reconcile what, speaking exactly?" asked her father.

"The Sermon on the Mount and the interior of a modern artistically furnished house," said the girl, speaking as if she spoke of a thing long considered.

"The command to take no thought for your life, with the strong, pure-seeming instinct for graceful, refined, and beautiful surroundings?" said George Kirkoswald. Then he added,

"Does it seem to you that no such reconciliation is possible?"

"On the contrary, I feel that *it must be possible*," declared Genevieve with enthusiasm.

"But I cannot see it; I cannot find it. One day I honour most the men who can set their foot upon the neck of pride, the pride of the eye, the pride of life—who can live out their days surrounded by four bare walls, and never know that they are bare. Another day, and my whole soul is stirred by some good, some glory that I discern through some triumph of human art—art which has drawn its inspiration from nature, and so, assuredly, can lead one from Nature up to Nature's God."

"How the world is made for each of us!" said Kirkoswald musingly, hardly recognizing his utterance as a quotation.

"You think that?" said Bartholomew; adding reverently, "It has always seemed to me that Christ's own different way of dealing with each differently constituted and differently circumstanced individual that came to Him, was certainly sufficient warrant for supposing that he had no desire to reduce

humanity to one dead level of thought and opinion."

"One may be sure He never meant that," said Kirkoswald; "and it seems to me, also, a sure thing that He never meant to crush out any human feeling for whatsoever things are lovely, or pure, or beautiful, or true."

"So far I am one with you," interposed Genevieve. "He who said, 'Consider the lilies,' and declared that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed as they were, could never have desired that any human being should pass through the world with eyes closed to its marvellous loveliness. But we were not speaking of natural beauty."

"No, we were not," said Kirkoswald, appreciating the effort to keep him to his argument. "But to reply to what you said just now, how many people have passed through the world with eyes closed to every glory of sunrise and sunset, who have never been awakened to one tender thrill by the rustle of green leaves, the ripple of a brook, or the sparkle of sunlight on a summer sea! How many have gone down to their graves careworn, toil-stained, crushed out of life by



the burden and heat of the day, who have never once in their whole long life felt the sweet influence of

‘The silence that is in the starry sky,  
The sleep that is among the lonely hills!’

If Art had no other mission but to minister to the needs of such as these, it would still have a most glorious and decided right of being. And therefore it is that I look upon a true artist as upon a true steward of the mysteries of God. He is not more nor less than an interpreter—a revealer to common eyes of nature, the ‘time-vesture,’ woven that man may have some ever-visible token of the nearness of his God.”

“You are listening, my daughter?”

“Yes, I am listening very willingly,” said Genevieve; “and also gratefully.”

“Oh, please don’t be grateful!” entreated George Kirkoswald. “That sounds as if I had made no impression at all. I should like to make an impression, if it were but a slight one, so that you may be the better prepared to listen to the Reconciler when he comes.”

“Don’t make light of it, please.”

"Certainly I will not. And, indeed, you are right; it is not a light matter in these days. Every one who can think at all is taking it more or less seriously; and, so far as I can discern, there is a general tendency to what one may term 'coming round,' on the part of those who might seem to be the natural opponents of art. I heard one clergyman confessing to another the other day that he had never seen the real glory and loveliness of a sunset sky until he had seen a few scores of painted sunsets."

"That bears out what Browning says. What is the passage, Genevieve?"

"You mean the one in 'Fra Lippo Lippi'?"—

'For don't you mark? we're made so that we love  
First when we see them painted, things we have passed  
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see;  
And so they are better, painted—better to us,  
Which is the same thing. Art was given for that;  
God uses us to help each other so,  
Lending our minds out.'"

"If I remember the context rightly, the poet includes more than landscape-painting," said Bartholomew, who appeared to be very content to elicit another's views, keeping

back his own, if indeed he had any that he could have presented on the spur of the moment, which is doubtful.

"Yes," said Genevieve, "he includes nature animate as well as inanimate. He puts the question :

'Do you feel thankful, ay or no,  
For this fair town's face, yonder river's line,  
The mountain round it, and the sky above,  
*Much more* the figures of man, woman, child,  
These are the frame to?'

"Of course, all that can be said for the painting of nature applies in a much higher and stronger measure to the painting of humanity, or so it seems to me," said Kirkoswald. "The character, the history, that lies so pathetically written in the lines of a human countenance may surely be as beautiful a thing, and as full of meaning, as the truth that lies in the scars of a rugged cliff-side. It is by the study of art that one learns to see 'what beauty there is in the dark eyes that are sunk with weeping, and in the paleness of those fixed faces which the world's adversity has compassed about, till they shine in their patience like dying watch-fires

through twilight.' I may be wrong, but it certainly appears to me that there is a greater sympathy abroad for all manner of suffering ; and I attribute the growth largely to the greater spread of art and poetry, under the head of poetry including the prose poems of such men as Dickens, such women as Mrs. Gaskell. . . . But there ! again I shall have to be brought back to the subject."

"No, I won't bring you back any more to-day," Genevieve said. "I have a feeling that I did not state my own case effectively in the beginning."

"Therefore my victory has been an easy one."

"You are feeling victorious?"

"On the whole, yes. But it modifies the feeling to be told that you did not bring your full strength against me. Will you do your worst next time?"

"I will do my best," said Genevieve.

"And may I be there to see?" said her father, restraining the smile that played about his face, lighting up its sadness with an almost pathetic light.

## CHAPTER XX.

## THE MISTRESS OF YARRELL CROFT.

“Lightly, her suit allow’d, she slipt away,  
And while she made her ready for her ride,  
Her father’s latest word humm’d in her ear,  
‘Being so very wilful you must go,’  
And changed itself and echo’d in her heart,  
‘Being so very wilful you must die.’”

TENNYSON.

THE thaw that followed that heavy snow was a very prolonged affair: some time had to pass before the Bartholomews could return the calls of some of their more distant neighbours. It was not an unhappy time—it was too full of life and work to be unhappy. Whenever there was light enough Noel Bartholomew wrought at his beautiful Ænone; or, if Mr. Severne came, he worked a little at the Sir Galahad. When the light

failed he would read, or draw in black and white, or sit and dream. Sometimes he would read aloud to Genevieve whilst she sat at her embroidery; sometimes in the firelight they would sit and talk. Genevieve always thought this the best time of all; there was so much confidence, so little strain; there was no more dread of silence than of mistaken speech.

One dull grey afternoon they sat together as usual: there was a cheery fire, and Genevieve's canary seemed to be singing to the leaping flame. Mr. Kirkoswald had called during the day, merely, he said, to beg that they would not think of going up to Usselby until the roads were better. He had stayed in the studio awhile, then he had lingered again in the dainty sitting-room; and Genevieve had found that his lingering there was very sweet—perilously sweet. When he went out, a little cry, half of gladness, half of a new and unknown pain, went after him, a cry that came echoing back a moment later with the force of an openly uttered reproach.

Genevieve was thinking of it as she sat silently there by her father's side in the

twilight. When she spoke he was aware of the slight effort in her voice.

"What age should you say Mr. Kirkoswald is, father?" she asked somewhat abruptly.

"I was thinking of his age this morning," answered Mr. Bartholomew. "He will be thirty-five, or thereabouts."

"Not more than that?"

"No, he can't be more than that. . . . What age should you have supposed him to be?"

"Fifty! . . . What is it that makes him look so old?"

"He does look old for his years, I admit; and there is a history in his face. But I should say it was the history of some more or less intellectual strife, rather than of any ordinary life-experience. Whatever it is, it has taken the years. Still it is a grand face and a grand head!"

"You are thinking of painting it?" said Genevieve, rather in the tone of a protest. A minute later she was conscious of a strong desire to see it painted.

"No; on the contrary, I decided this morning that his face was one that I should

never attempt," replied Mr. Bartholomew. "I could but fail. It is too full of the perplexity of life, and his eyes have too much of the luminousness of thought in them. Altogether there is a good deal in him that could never be made visible on canvas. I should try to make it visible; it would elude me; and I should be left with the consciousness of having spent my strength for nought."

There was another brief pause, then another question came with effort:—

"You like him, father?"

"Yes, I like him."

"You don't say that heartily."

"Don't I? Shall I say it again, and put more heart into it?"

"There! that is satire. We will not speak of Mr. Kirkoswald again to-day."

\* \* \* \* \*

Another afternoon—a pale yellow afternoon—the cab came from Thirkeld Abbas to take Noel Bartholomew and his daughter to Yarrell Croft. It was a large, massively built, grey stone house, standing half-way down the slope where the upland curved to the west. The roads about it were well



kept, the leafless trees were tall and stately, and they were so grouped as to look picturesque even in their leaflessness. In front of the house there was a portico with pillars, and a double flight of broad stone steps.

Miss Richmond was in the drawing-room. She was alone when they went in, sitting there, gracious and graceful, in a dress of ruby velvet. She was like a picture in its proper setting now. The yellow light outside seemed to give value to the rich furniture, the glowing draperies, the blue and crimson and gold of the painted and diapered ceiling. Genevieve could not help wondering what Miss Richmond had been doing, and of what she had been thinking as she sat there in the midst of so much magnificence. There was no sign of any book or work. The grand piano was closed. The luxurious-looking cushions, strewn about so profusely, seemed to be the only thing in actual use.

Miss Richmond was very quiet, very impressive, perhaps even more impressive than usual. Cecil, coming into the room, seemed as if he hardly understood his sister's mood. He watched her furtively for a time ; then he

ceased to watch, or to try to understand, but he went on wishing that she would be more cordial to Miss Bartholomew. Genevieve had not missed any cordiality. She was listening to Miss Richmond, wondering about her life. Something seemed to be weighing upon her, some great loneliness or weariness, some strong desire. She was speaking of wasted lives, of unseen sorrows, unsuspected despairs, of lifelong misunderstandings. Mr. Bartholomew was listening, replying when reply was called for, but he felt at a loss to know whether Miss Richmond's remarks were quite of the general nature they appeared on the surface of them to be. It was odd how, now and then, the man's keen perceptive powers failed him.

Genevieve knew less of Miss Richmond than her father did, but she saw more than he did to-day. To her there was nothing impersonal about Diana Richmond's words, except the grammatical mood of them.

Once the girl thought that, if they had been alone, she would have knelt down beside Miss Richmond, and clasped her hand, and prayed her to speak of the thing, what-

ever it was, that was lying underneath the stilled, oppressive graciousness of her ways. Her words were said slowly, quietly, emphatically, but they had the effect of a wild cry of confession upon the girl, whose own emotions were just then being wrought upon more than she herself knew.

"The strange thing is," Miss Richmond was saying, "that people don't get over things; they *don't* forget, as the preachers of consolation tell you they do. 'Time heals all sorrows,' they tell you; but it is a platitude, and not a true one. Sometimes people deceive themselves; they think they have forgotten, and then something brings all back again, and it is worse than before."

"I suppose it is so, very often," said Mr. Bartholomew, sadly. He was thinking of his own sorrow just then—he could not help it—wondering if he could ever deceive himself into thinking that he had forgotten.

Miss Richmond was continuing—

"I had a friend," she said; "it was years ago; we were children together. When she was engaged to be married I felt it like a blow, as if she had died; and I went into

deep mourning. But the engagement was soon broken off. The man was a flirt, and as cruel and heartless as a man could be. Nothing would move him. She was years before she got over it. All the best of her life went in anguish. But she did seem to get over it at last. Then—only a year or two ago—the man came back: he had been abroad for years; and with him came all my friend's sorrow. It had all to be lived and endured over again. She is enduring yet. You might think it would kill her, but it will not. She is very strong. She will live and suffer for a lifetime yet. And the man does not care. They often meet. He must see it all, but he cares nothing—nothing for the lifelong martyrdom that he has brought about."

Suddenly — while Miss Richmond was speaking—there flashed across Noel Bartholomew's brain the remembrance of the conversation that had passed between himself and Miss Craven on the first night of his arrival at Hunsgarth Hags. He glanced towards Genevieve, but she did not understand the glance. How should she?

Miss Craven and her father had spoken of a dozen people, all of whom were only names to her. How should she remember that George Kirkoswald's name and Miss Richmond's had been mentioned together? And if she had remembered, how should she have suspected—as her father did—that Miss Richmond's friend and Miss Richmond's self were one and the same, with historical variations.

“And after all it is only a suspicion,” he said to himself during the long drive homeward from Yarrell Croft—it was very long and very silent, and the silence was less comprehensible than the silences between the father and daughter usually were.

Two days later the thick yellow sky changed to a clear, vivid, frosty blue. Noel Bartholomew was divided in his mind as to how he should make the most of such a day. Finally the expression on his daughter's face decided him. He would leave his mournful Cēnone, and go down to Soulsgrif Bight to sketch a wreck washed ashore during the last night of the storm; the night after the day on which George Kirkoswald had spent

his strength and risked his life to save the lives of others.

It was not only Kirkoswald's chivalrous courage that was moving Bartholomew to have faith in him. Doubt thrust itself in; echoes of Dorothy Craven's words came back; remembrances of Miss Richmond's emotion; but Noel Bartholomew was not a man to be unduly influenced by such evidences as these against his own better judgment. "There has been nothing in Kirkoswald's life that he could not explain, if explanation were needed," he said to himself in the dead of the night, when he lay awake, thinking of his daughter's future as he had never thought of it before, and realizing his own carelessness about it.

The carelessness was incomprehensible now that its probable consequences were becoming visible in the distance. If life were spared to him, with power to work, he might atone in a measure; but the "if" was an important one, and he perceived it now. He could only hope that knowledge had not come too late.

Soulsgrif Bight was all alive that morning—almost as much alive as it had been on the day of the storm. The stranded ship had

broken up during the last tide or two. Groups of figures were hurrying about ; men with gay-coloured sou'-westers and dark-blue guernseys ; women with red shawls ; children with bright pinafores ; some were bringing firewood from the wrecks that lay on the dark beach ; others brought ropes and iron. A man was coming up with a clock that he had found amongst the wreckage ; both its hands were gone, and the dial-plate was cracked across. Some children were making merry over a bird-cage which had been found among the tangled weeds, with a little dead bird at the bottom of it.

People were straying all about the sands. Some were sauntering away toward the reef, others were coming back. On the edge of the quay there was a gentleman standing—a tall, strong man, with dark hair ; a loose grey coat, and an impressive manner of wearing it. He was talking to the auctioneer, who had come down from Thurkeld Abbas to sell one of the wrecks. Suddenly he turned his head, not knowing why he turned it, and the colour that rose slowly to his clear, dark-toned face was plain there for

any one to see. He came forward rather hurriedly, but as if he tried to repress something as he came. The light in his eyes as he shook hands with Genevieve was at least as glad as the light in her own.

"Do you know that I have been hoping—I may say expecting—that you would come?" he said. "Indeed, more or less, I believe that I always expect you to be in Soulsgrif Bight when I come down."

"Do you expect to see me standing on that rock in a storm?" she asked, the smile dying away from her lips as she spoke, and a grave look coming into her eyes. "I sometimes wonder how I can ever forget that moment!"

"I think I don't forget it," George Kirkoswald replied, speaking intently, but as if he spoke to himself. Mr. Bartholomew was walking forgetfully away with Ishmael Crudas toward a group of people who were gathering round the wreck that was about to be sold by auction.

There was a little silence. Mr. Kirkoswald and Genevieve were standing on "the staith," as the people termed the wooden



quay. The sun was shining, in a pale, wintry fashion, over the blue sea that was only just stirred by a light breeze; the wavelets broke far out over the purple-brown reef that was all broken into long lines by the strips of standing water which reflected the pale blue of the sky. Russet-red anchors were lying half-embedded in the sands; a strong sail lay riven into strips of canvas a few inches wide; a tall mast was there, with broken yards clinging to it; half-buried underneath there was a ship's lantern and a tea-kettle; a little farther on there was a curving piece of the back of a violin standing out of the sand.

"You will not care to go down to the sale?" said Mr. Kirkoswald. Turning to look at Genevieve as he spoke, he saw that her eyes were filled with tears. "You had better come and see Davy Drewe," he added with gentleness, moving to go as he spoke. "Davy has been wanting to see you for days past, and I am beginning to have a notion that he holds me responsible for your non-appearance. . . . Would you like to go and see him now?"

"Yes," said Genevieve; "I should like it

very much. But will you tell my father? He may want me if he is going to sketch."

"I will tell him while you talk to Davy. I should like you to stay there awhile, in the cottage, if you will. You are not used to scenes like this."

It was all quite natural—this care, this protection, this deep understanding kindness. It was as natural as if it had always been; and yet it had the tremulous surprise, the quick, quiet, palpitating gladness of a new and un hoped-for joy.

There were only Ailsie Drewe and her little lad in the cottage on the hillside. Ailsie was knitting, and she might not stay her hand; she earned much of her living that way, knitting strong blue guernseys for the fishermen of the Bight.

"Eh, bless you, then, is 't you?" she had said in her own rude, glad way as she opened the door. "Come yer ways in, an' sit ya doon, both o' ya. Ah said when miss came she'd be comin' wi' you; Ah said so to Davy. An' Ah said if Ah'd been better off for menseful \* graithing, Ah'd ha' maäde bold to

\* Menseful—decent, respectable.

ha' asked you both tiv a cup o' tea." Then the woman stopped, too dignified to lay bare the worst, and too cheerful for any ordinary listener to suspect it.

George went out presently, and Davy went upstairs, coming down again with a tiny model of a ship, which he would have lacked courage to offer but for his mother's presence there. It was not very daintily finished, but it was beautiful by reason of its exquisite proportions.

"He's done it all hisself, miss, an' he thowt 'at ya'd like to hev it, as it 'ud sort o' remind ya o' that day, an' o' your life an' his bein' saved together like. An' eh, but yon gentleman is a brave man! an' a strong un, too. They saäy he pulled i' the boat as if he'd niver done nowt but handle an oar since he was born. . . . Ah reckon ya'd know him afore yer came te this neighbourhood, miss?"

"No; I did not know him before," said Genevieve. "I did not know him until that day."

"Ya don't saäy so? Then, mebbe, 'tish't as Ah thowt," said Ailsie, looking into Genevieve's face, as if she feared that she had

made a mistake. "Ya mun excuse me, miss; if Ah said owt 'at Ah sudn't ha' said. But there weren't no harm anyways in me praisin' him. Ah didn't know him mysel' till they said his name were Kirkoswald; but Ah'd seen him when he was a little lad; Ah'd seen him up at Usselby. . . . Ya'll ha' been there, miss?"

"No," said Genevieve, again feeling that the admission would be considered an unwilling one—"no, we have not been to Usselby yet. . . . Do you know it well?"

"Noa; Ah don't know it nut to saäy well; but 'tisen't much of a plaäce; nut like Yarrell Croft, nor nothing o' that sort. Years ago 'twas a kin o' rackledoon oäd spot; an' Ah niver heerd 'at owt had been done to it. T' oäd man was sa queer, ya know. He warn't nowt ov a gentleman; nut like this. He'd a seeght o' money, so they said; but he were as greedy as sin; t' sarvants used to tell on him goin' doon inta t' kitchen, an' cuttin' a talla candle inta three, an' givin' owther on 'em a bit yance a week. An' they warn't alloo'd noä supper. He turned ivery sarvant there was off t' spot one winter,

acause they'd roasted some 'taties unbeknown  
tiv him."

"But had he no wife?" asked Genevieve, who could hardly in any way connect George Kirkoswald with such a home-life as this.

"Noä, honey," said Ailsie Drewe, slipping into the word of endearment unawares, as homely Yorkshire folk will do, when their hearts are won. "Noä, honey. His wife died when this gentleman was born; that mebbe was how t' oäd man came to be sa despert straänge. An' he was straänge! Ah remember once when Ah was nobbut a little lass goin' aboot wi' t' Kessenmas waits to sing; an' we went trampin' all t' way up to Usselby i' t' snaw an' darkness; an' what did t' oäd teästril \* do but throw up his winder, an' fire a gun right in among us afore we'd fairly getten started wi' '*God rest you, merry gentlemen!*'"

"Oh, imagine it! Was any one hurt?" Genevieve asked in amazement.

"Noä, honey, so it happened. We ran off, despert frightened; an' we niver went there no more. T' oäd chap died; an' t' son were

\* Teastril—a violent or boisterous character.

sent away to school; an' it's but little we've heerd on him doon here till t'other daäy. I hope we'll be seein' and hearin' more on him noo. He seems to take a sight o' interest i' poor folk; an' it's nut what we're used to fra t' quality hereabouts. They're despert hard, mostly. If they buy a bit o' fish they'll beat ya doon i' price till ya scarce can see yer oän again."

Davy was sitting still, waiting, looking wistful; but when his turn came he had very little to say; he could only smile and change colour, and push his yellow curls nervously away from his forehead when Miss Bartholomew spoke to him. He was going to sea again, he said, after Christmas. The owners of the *Viking* had another ship almost ready to sail. "Eh me!" said his poor mother; "he'll be like his father. He'll niver ha nowt but what he blashes i' t' sea for; an' then he'll end wi' lyin' at the bottom o' 't. It is a dree doom."

## CHAPTER XXI.

## THE SOUNDING OF HUMAN CHORDS.

“Let be, beloved—

I will taste somewhat this same poverty—

Try these temptations, grudges, gnawing shames,

For which 'tis blamed. How probe an unfelt evil?

Wouldst be the poor man's friend? Must freeze with  
him—

Test sleepless hunger—let thy crippled back

Ache o'er the endless furrow.”

KINGSLEY, *The Saint's Tragedy*.

NOEL BARTHOLOMEW spent a couple of hours over his sketch of the wreck of the *Waldemar*. His daughter sat near him awhile; but it was too cold for her to remain sitting there in the December breeze. Perhaps, too, she was in a less quiescent mood than usual. She went back again to the little hamlet after a time; asking George Kirkos-

wald to remain there by her father, who always liked to have a companion near him when he was sketching out of doors. She wanted to go in and out among the fisher-folk quite alone.

"They will talk to one person as they cannot talk to two or three," she said, speaking to Mr. Kirkoswald, who was accompanying her to the edge of the reef. "If I had a trouble I could never tell it to more than one person."

"Do you think you could tell it to me?" asked George Kirkoswald, speaking with a sudden effort.

Genevieve hesitated a moment, her head drooped a little, her colour came and went; but she spoke honestly, and without affectation.

"Yes; I think I could," she said in a low, penetrating voice. She knew that she made a great concession. George Kirkoswald knew that it was not made lightly.

Was it fortunate that they were parting just as the word was said? Genevieve was saved from further embarrassment. Kirkoswald, with a glance that might mean mere



gratitude, went back to where the white easel gleamed upon the dark reef. Genevieve went forward to the village in the rocks; happier than when she left it a little while before.

\* \* \* \* \*

An hour later they went up Soulsgrif Bank together, Genevieve, her father, and George Kirkoswald. The two men were talking over certain suggestions that had arisen out of the day's events; Genevieve was silent, and her face told of a certain amount of sadness.

"You have not been accustomed to what clergymen's wives term 'parish work,'" said George Kirkoswald, passing round to her side.

"Then the result of what you believe to be my first attempt is visible?"

"Not the result, but the effect upon yourself. . . . It is very saddening, I admit, even in a place like this, to feel your way right into the lives of the very poor."

"I thought I knew," said Genevieve. "I thought I understood it all better. I have read about it and thought about it, but one has to see, to meet it face to face, to know

how deep it goes ; how entirely suffering and endurance is their life ; how it enters into everything, the food they eat, the clothes they wear, the beds they lie on, and the fires they burn. And what strikes one is the quietness one finds everywhere, the extreme patience. I have been talking to an old woman over seventy years of age, who has never once in her whole long life known what it was to be sure of the means of existence for a week beforehand. And that woman's temper is as sweet, her faith as whole, as if she had never known an ungratified desire."

"That I can well believe," said Kirkoswald. "One fancies sometimes that such people must see farther than they seem to see ; that they must feel unconsciously something of the influence of the wider laws of the world's onward movement—laws that compel them to take their part in the great human sacrifice that is always being offered up for the wheels of progress to pass over."

"Do you think they dream of that?" asked Genevieve. "Ah, it is such a hard thing to remember, to realize ! And yet I

believe, as James Hinton believed, that we are all of us helping, all of us who suffer, to work out the redemption of the race. It is beautiful, it is sad, it is infinitely great."

"Yes: it is great; but, as you say, the idea has an element of sadness in it. Now and then one meets aged, tired, sorrowful eyes fixed on one's face full of things altogether unutterable. They are the eyes of people who have lived through want, and wrong, and contempt, and pain, and lifelong neglect; but it is as if they said, 'And yet we have not lived vainly.' Vainly?—no; it is not such lives as theirs that are lived in vain."

"The great problem of how best to help the suffering poor," said Bartholomew, "is always more or less a painful one, unless you happen to be able to offer substantial help yourself in the cases that actually come under your own notice."

"That is true," said Kirkoswald. "But I fear that a great deal more than mere giving must go to the solving of the problem."

"It seems to me that there is almost infinite good to be done without any giving at

all," interposed Genevieve warmly. "That is the one thing that struck me most of all to-day, the gratitude of the people for a word, a mere look of sympathy. They don't say they are grateful; but you feel it in their very accent, in their reluctance to let you turn away, in their wistful hoping that you will come again. Oh, if I could, I would go down there and live amongst them, live as they live, work as they work, endure what they endure; then I would tell the world what I had learnt in Soulsgrif Bight."

"And you expect the world would listen?" asked her father.

"There are people in it who would listen, some who have no chance of hearing of such things, some who would not go out of their way to hear them. . . . Oh, the world is not bad!" said the girl, speaking out of her own bright human heart which no experience had as yet torn or bruised. "The world is not bad, it is not unkind; it is only stupidly inanimate. And it is not only where the poor are concerned. We show it in everything. I believe people hold aloof from

each other as much from fear and dread of repulsion as from anything else. Sometimes—in London—I have felt half-wretched, half-angry, to see a room full of people, one staring coldly, another contemptuously, another with sublime indifference; and no two people taking any trouble to get nearer to each other. And yet these very people . . .”

“Won’t you finish what you were going to say?” asked George, drawing a little closer to her, and lowering his voice somewhat.

“I was going to say that those very people will, at least every Sunday, declare that they believe in some future life, and that one of the joys of that life will consist of bright and fervid and intimate intercourse with others—‘Communion of Saints,’ we term it. But who are the saints? And in what is it supposed the communion will consist? . . . I think sometimes that if we don’t begin it beforehand, begin with small and poor beginnings here, we shall never continue it elsewhere.”

“Then you don’t consider that it is something of the nature of a solecism to

introduce religious topics into ordinary social intercourse?"

"Religious! What precisely is religion?" asked the girl passionately. "Is it going to church on Sundays? Is it singing hymns? Is it even the scrupulous praying of one's daily prayers? Is that all that it means for us—all that it can be made to mean? If so, keep it silent, then; keep it straitly in its place. If it might be made to mean something less pathetically unhopeful, less unprofitably dreary—if, for instance, it might be made to mean a more carefully beautiful human life, with finer and higher sympathies and manners for every-day uses of life; if it might suggest a quicker and more keen-sighted compassion for unobtrusive sorrows, a less cruel contempt for uncomprehended failure and mistake, a less open and sickening worship of wealth for wealth's sake, a stronger and more fervent desire to lessen but for one day, one hour, some small part of the great crushing burden that we help to lay upon the hapless shoulders of others—if religion might but ever so remotely mean these, or any of these, then, in God's name,

let us speak of it ; and we shall cease to dread the commission of that unpardonable sin, a social solecism."

\* \* \* \* \*

George Kirkoswald had a long and lonely walk before him after he had said "good-bye" to the Bartholomews at Netherbank. Lately he had grown a little tired of walking alone ; or so he fancied. To-day he covered a good deal of ground quite unaware of loneliness.

It was not altogether thought of Genevieve Bartholomew that occupied his mind. It seemed to him that he had lived a tolerably long life before that eventful day in Soulsgrif Bight. He had lived much, he had endured much ; he had made mistakes, and suffered for them. His early dreams, like the early dreams of all of us, had wrought for him some very painful waking moments. Still there had been good in his life as well as evil, gain as well as loss. The thing that impressed him most when he looked back was the enormous aggregate of the experience which had been crowded into his five and thirty years. Until quite recently

it had seemed to him that if he should live another five and thirty years they would inevitably be years of comparative emptiness. There could be nothing to make them otherwise; nothing that could add any zest to life, and make the natural ending of it seem particularly undesirable. He had ideas, and not vague ones, of the future and its work, but they had been very apt to round themselves off with an expressive sigh.

He was thinking of the future now as he went striding over the dark-brown moor, but no sigh followed upon his thoughts.

He had put away the past—he put it away with an audibly-spoken word:—

“Oh, the difference!” he said; “the unspeakable difference between one human soul and another!”

He was thinking of two souls as he spoke, and neither of them his own. One had been laid before him in that past from which he turned so willingly; the other was unfolding itself to him now. Another page had just been turned, fair, pure, glowing with human warmth, alight with intellectual fires, inspired



by something beyond, finer and rarer even than these. What wonder that as he walked on he should lose the sense of time and distance! What wonder that, for that hour at least, the future that had seemed so irksome and infelicitous should open before him like a vision of a new life, a life that he might live, entering upon its fair chances and far-reaching possibilities, with the hope and gladness of a man entering into possession of a great and unexpected heritage!

## CHAPTER XXII.

"I CRY YOUR MERCY—PITY—LOVE ! AY, LOVE."

"Scorn me less  
For saying the thing I should not. Well I know  
I should not. I have kept, as others have,  
The iron rule of womanly reserve  
In lip and life till now."

MRS. BROWNING.

A WINTER'S afternoon, with a clear, deep-blue summer sky ; a low sun slanting across the Marishes, making dreamy picturesque effects where you least expect to find them. A few stray cattle stand among the dead reeds ; little pools of blue water reflect them. In the stubble-fields at Netherbank some great grey Royston crows jerk solemnly about ; a flight of field-fares rush past ; Genevieve's pigeons come whirling down from the cote, and perch on the top of the old draw-well.

In the little sitting-room also there is an atmosphere of quaint and quiet beauty. The sun slants across the room, lighting up Genevieve's shining hair, and her pale, attentive face. It rests, too, on the soft silver-white hair of Canon Gabriel, who is speaking.

"And you think, then, that so far as you can see, the plan has answered?" the Canon asks, in a tone of deep interest.

"Yes; so far as I can see. But I am never quite sure how far I do see. And my father needs, what I believe most men of genius need, some one to see for him, to think for him—that is, so far as thought of anything but his own work is concerned. If he can concentrate his whole force continuously upon that, it is well with him."

"I see; but when the thread gets broken . . . ?"

"Then that particular thread is broken for ever. . . . He has not touched one of the pictures that were begun before—before my mother died."

"And is the work that he is doing now as good as the work that he was doing then?"

Genevieve hesitated a moment, then she

said, lifting sad eyes to Canon Gabriel's face, "No, it is not, not as a rule. I would not tell him so for the world; and, happily, there is no one else here to tell him. And I hardly know myself where it fails. It is not in design, and it is not in execution; so far as that goes he will do good work or none. The defect seems to arise out of failure of that staying power which he once had so abundantly. He changes his mind; he alters this and that, and so confuses the original conception. This has happened to everything he has done here, except the *Ænone*; that is the exception to the rule. It is as perfect, perhaps more perfect, than aught he ever did. But his work is taking ten times as much out of him as it used to do, because of this very uncertainty."

"Ah! that is quite intelligible," said the sympathetic old man. "I have had my fears lately, but they were of another kind. Now I understand. That was partly why I came with Severne this afternoon, that I might see you alone a little, while your father and he were busy. . . . Is the Sir Galahad promising well?"

"Sir Galahad is here to answer for himself," said that benignant young man, bursting into the room, displaying his beautiful white teeth and his crimson blush. "I say, I've been turned out of the studio! There's a lady there. . . . Miss Richmond!"

"Miss Richmond!" exclaimed Genevieve, in amazement. "She is in the studio? . . . Then I ought to go down!"

"I—I don't think I would, if I were you!" said Sir Galahad. "I beg pardon, but—well, you know Miss Richmond seems as if she didn't want anybody. That was why I came away. She looked awfully glad when I said I would go."

That Miss Richmond should be described as looking "awfully glad" was, to say the least of it, a little incongruous under the circumstances.

There was something in her face and in her manner that Noel Bartholomew would not have attempted to describe at all. It perplexed him, and he was perplexed, too, by her coming in the manner she had come.

"I will let my daughter know that you

are here," he said, moving as if to follow Mr. Severne. But Miss Richmond detained him, as much by her look as by any word she said. Already it was becoming evident that she was in one of her "desperate tranquillities."

As usual, she was dressed with a studiously careless magnificence. She wore a purple silk dress, which made her look paler than she was, and the white shawl which she had thrown artistically about her shoulders added yet more to the look of pallor, almost of suffering, that was upon her face. She threw her hat aside, as she had a habit of doing, on every possible and impossible occasion, knowing that she could afford to dispense with the shade of it. Her thick, dusky hair, curving downward over her forehead, made sufficient shade to add intensity to her eyes, had they needed adventitious aid. But they did not; they were dark enough, changeful enough, inscrutable enough, for any ordinary uses of life.

She sat upon a low sofa, over which Bartholomew had thrown some antique embroidered stuffs that he had been painting

from. One hand grasped lightly the cushion by her side, the elbow of the other arm was placed on her knee, her head rested on the white fingers that were turned under her chin. Her purple train was wrapped about her feet.

She sat quite silent for some moments—this, too, was a way she had at the beginning of even ordinary interviews. It was impressive.

Her half-closed eyes seemed as if they were scrutinizing the picture on the easel with an extreme judicial scrutiny.

Bartholomew looked, waited, wondered.

“You have come to make me an offer for the *Ænone*, Miss Richmond?” he said at last, smiling as he spoke under his grey moustache.

Miss Richmond raised her eyes slowly to his, not fully unclosing them.

“No,” she said, speaking in a low, quiet, deliberate way. There was no smile about her mouth. Her prominent upper lip curved forward, the under one was drawn in. “No, I have not come to make an offer for the *Ænone*.”

There was another silence. It was broken by Miss Richmond, speaking always with the same forceful calm.

"I was desirous of seeing your picture," she said; "I have heard of it."

"Have you, indeed? Do people talk of pictures in the neighbourhood of Murk-Marishes?"

"They talk of everything in the neighbourhood of Murk-Marishes. They talk of you, and they talk of me."

"Ah! that is more conceivable," replied Bartholomew, instinctively keeping to a light and lively tone. "That is much more conceivable; but I should like to know what they say of the picture—I should like to know *all* they say. That is the drawback of being surrounded by non-critical people, one hears only the praise."

"Do you like to hear blame?"

"No, I don't. There are people in the world who tell one their adverse opinion with a kind intention, no doubt. They think it must be a good thing for an artist to be made aware of his faults, of the mistakes he has fallen into. It never seems to occur to them



that he has probably been very sadly and bitterly aware of his shortcomings all through. A man seldom sees mistakes of any kind till he has made them, and as a rule that is too late. The best plan, undoubtedly, is to put your failures in the fire if they can be put there. . . . But you have not yet told me what you have heard said of the *Ænone* ? ”

He drew the easel forward into a fuller light as he spoke. The picture on it was large ; the figure of *Ænone* standing there in her white Greek drapery, “ leaning on a fragment twined with vine,” singing her sad music to the stillness of the mountain shades of *Ida*, was a striking and infinitely suggestive figure. The fascination of the picture was, of course, centred in the face of the “ beautiful-browed ” maiden. It was purity itself—faultless purity ; and it had in it an unspeakable loveliness, a most sweet and touching sorrow. The pale countenance was uplifted ; the eyes raised supplicatingly ; the wan yellow hair floated down over the neck and robe ; the lips were parted as if uttering the words that were to be given as keynote to the picture.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die. .

\* \* \* \* \*

Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all  
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls  
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,  
A cloud that gather'd shape: for it may be  
That, while I speak of it, a little while  
My heart may wander from its deeper woe."

Altogether, the work had been made to seem what indeed it really was, an echo in colour of the poem that had inspired it.

"It is Tennyson's *Enone*," said Bartholomew, "and Tennyson's scenery. The background, the pine-trees and the flowers, the lawns and meadow-ledges, the suggestion of Ilion in the distance of swimming vapour; these things are all taken from the singer of to-day."

"So I have heard; and I have read the poem that I might be able to understand the picture. I read it this morning. . . . I could not help wondering how much you had comprehended it yourself!"

"Then now you can see."

"No: pardon me. I cannot, not altogether."

"So far, then, my intention has failed?"

“Not if your intention was simply to paint a beautiful picture,” said Miss Richmond. “I can see that it is beautiful. I can see that the face is the face of a lovely and sorrowful girl. But it is different from my ideal; the ideal raised in me by the poem itself. . . . It is not the face of a despairing, forsaken woman, longing passionately for death to end her despair! praying to death, crying aloud to him on the hills:—

‘Pass by the happy souls that love to live:  
I pray thee, pass before my light of life!’

Your *Ænone* is not therefore the *Ænone* that I find in Tennyson.”

“You think it needs more fervidness?”

“I do not know. It needs something it has not.”

“My idea,” said Bartholomew, anxious apparently to keep the conversation as artistic as possible—“my idea has always been that either artist or poet is the greater in his art if he can succeed in heightening his effects by repression, by understatement rather than overstatement. . . . It would be easily possible to make the *Ænone* shriek aloud.”

“I suppose you could never understand

that a woman might be driven to shriek aloud?" said Miss Richmond, in tones that were as far as possible from shrieking.

"One has to understand such things," said Bartholomew, at a loss to know what to say. The feeling was gathering about him that he was standing on the very verge of some precipice; and that he had stood there before. He could only turn his face, refusing to look downward.

Miss Richmond looked at him for a moment as he made this reply. It was a look of appeal, of suffering, of such tenderness as he had never thought to see on the face before him. It was only pain to him to see it there.

When she spoke again she spoke as if the silence had been full of continued speech.

"Have you forgotten so completely?" she asked, in a tone that almost startled him by its intensity.

He might, without cruelty, have asked to what particular incident of his life she was referring, so little impression of any lasting kind had been made upon him by that part of his existence which had been lived within Miss Richmond's ken. That was about all

that could be said of it—that it had been lived within reach of her influence. Her question as to whether he had forgotten awoke no sense of shame, of regret. If any touch of embarrassment was upon him, it was not for his own sake.

He was not a vain man now ; he had not been vain twenty years before. He had always been conscious of his own exterior disadvantages. He even believed himself to have been saddened by his want of the power of making a favourable impression at first sight. When he had been able no longer to hide from himself that Miss Richmond was apparently trying to make a favourable impression upon him, he had with excellent good sense set it down to her desire to beguile the heavy days that were passing on at Yarrell Croft. Besides, tall and splendidly-formed as she was, he had but looked upon her as a child, an untrained, inexperienced, and rather daringly unwise girl of seventeen ; while he was a man of well-nigh thirty years. In point of fact the whole affair had amused him first, and then annoyed him, without once awakening in him any real interest.

Now that he was thus asked if he had forgotten, it was but natural that a keen and vivid memory like his should bring back the time with many of its small incidents. It passed across him like a flash, that one summer when he had been half-vexed to find that he could not set up his easel anywhere in the neighbourhood without sooner or later seeing Miss Richmond coming toward him, or hearing her step behind him. She had sat beside him, talked to him, looked at him, questioned him, and even read to him, until, from being glad to see her, he had grown to dread her coming with a strong and really well-defined dread. She had discovered this, and in the end there had been a scene. Was it of this that she was thinking as she sat there on the studio sofa among the embroideries?

"I am afraid I forget very few things, Miss Richmond," he said at last. He was feeling some compassion, some desire to make his resistance as little hard and cruel as might be.

"If that be so, then, at least you can understand me," Diana Richmond went on, looking into his face with eyes expressive only of

keen pain. "I forget nothing. I have never forgotten. Indeed, it does but seem as if all through these long weary years every feeling had been growing, intensifying itself. . . . And once I thought I had forgotten; you will have heard of that. And that was one reason why I came to-day to tell you the truth. I thought, too, that I might have led you to make wrong inferences the other day when I told you that story of my friend. . . . You remember?"

"Yes, I remember quite distinctly."

"And you discovered that I spoke an allegory—that I meant myself when I spoke of another?"

"Yes, I may admit it since you ask. I thought that you alluded to your own experience, and I was sorry."

"You were sorry?"

"Yes."

"May I ask why you were sorry?"

"To learn that you had suffered so much. It is natural that one should feel regret at another's pain."

Again Miss Richmond looked at him wonderingly, appealingly.

"You might have saved me from all the pain I have ever had," she said at length, in low, wistful, beseeching tones. Then her head dropped, her face slipped downward till it was hidden by her white hand. "You might have saved me!—you might have saved me!" she murmured in a wild, piercing way.

Noel Bartholomew sat with clasped hands, looking into the fire. The grey hollow of his cheeks looked greyer; the deep intensity of his eyes seemed deeper for this strange perplexity. There was safety only in silence.

Miss Richmond raised her head presently; there was a new look on her face—a look as of one torn in conflict and overpowered.

"What was it I said of George Kirkoswald just now?" she asked, evidently trying to remember.

"You said nothing," replied Bartholomew; "that is, you did not mention his name."

"No? I should be glad to know that his name need never pass my lips again. If I ever felt hate in my life, if I know what hate is, then I hate that man. It has not always been so; I know that, and sometimes . . .



but no, no, I do hate him, and I wanted to tell you so. I wanted to tell you, knowing that it was safe with you." Then Diana Richmond changed her tone for a moment, and added, "There may yet be reason why I should be glad to know that that fact had only been confided to one person, and that one a gentleman."

"I think it will be safe with me," said Bartholomew, with as little expression of any kind as he could use. He was not sorry to know this thing. He could conceive of nothing just then that could make him wish to disclose it.

"And that is all you have to say?" asked Miss Richmond with surprise. "That is all your reply? It is no relief to you to know that I do not care for another?"

The only reply that Bartholomew could have made truthfully would have seemed pitiless, almost inhuman under the circumstances. Again silence only was possible to him; but it was not a silence that could be mistaken.

There was a new softness in Miss Richmond's tone when she spoke again.

"I am not a child now," she said. "I need not tell you that I know all that this means—this that I am saying to you. I know what the world would think of it, and of me; and it shows how I trust you, how I recognize you for what you are, that I can say it at all. But do not think it is easy; do not think it is costing me nothing. . . . Nothing? It is my life."

Bartholomew did not look at her. He was still looking with grave grey eyes into the dying fire. The sun was low now; it had gone over the hill-tops; and the studio was dim, the air chill and heavy.

"It is not easy to me—this part that I have to take," he replied after a time. "You will understand that; and, therefore, you will believe it."

"How can I understand?" she asked, speaking with a subdued passionateness. "How can I understand that you should be so inexorable—so impassive? . . . Answer me this—at least answer me this—do you hate me? Am I hateful in your sight?"

Noel Bartholomew looked at the face before him. It was beautiful at any time; it was

much more than beautiful now in the new light of suffering and tenderness.

"Only one answer is possible to that question, Miss Richmond," he said; "and I hope I hardly need make it. I do not hate you; most certainly I do not. I am not conscious even of the faintest antipathy."

Diana Richmond looked up. A smile came over her lips; it was the first smile that had been there that day, and it was full of sadness; but, despite the sadness, there was a touch of wonder and disdain.

"You are not conscious even of antipathy?" she repeated slowly. For a moment or two she sat silent, stirless, looking out from under her dusky hair, away into some vague distance. A keen observer might have seen by her heavy breathing, by her dilated eyes, by the quiver of lips that seemed firmly closed, that some strong conflict was going on within.

It was even so. She fought with a wild temptation; and she won. Her impulse, hearing this man's quiet, indifferent confession of indifference, had been to rise to her feet, to stand before him, to pour down upon him her wrath, her contempt, her utter scorn

for a thing so callous, so apathetic, so obtusely imperturbable. This she could have done effectively without bating one iota of the love she had—that she had undoubtedly always had—for this man, whose love was not for her.

Another thought crossed her mind. There was a temptation that she might throw down before him. There were men in the world, she said to herself, who, if they could not give their affection, would at least consent to sell a semblance of it for a fair price. Miss Richmond was not so wealthy as the world supposed her to be, but she knew that she could offer a price which might surely seem fair to a non-provident and not too-successful artist. . . . She thought of it a moment; then she put the thought away. This man was not as other men.

She rose to her feet suddenly, at last, and drew her shawl about her. Her hat had fallen to the floor. Bartholomew stooped for it, handed it to her with a look of pain on his face, and Miss Richmond took it quite silently. She did not offer her hand as she went out into the twilight. Her carriage

was there. Noel Bartholomew would have gone with her to the gate across the fields, but she turned to decline this last attention. She said no parting word ; but Bartholomew, watching as she went, saw the clasping of white hands, the passionate upturning of a despairing face ; he heard, too, a cry, a low subdued cry that touched him more nearly to the heart than all that had gone before. Long afterward he heard it echoing, echoing plaintively—

“Is there no hope? . . . . none? . . . .  
Will nothing win back hope?”

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### USSELBY HALL.

“Sometimes from her eyes  
I did receive fair speechless messages.”  
*Merchant of Venice.*

It was a satisfaction to Genevieve to know that George Kirkoswald was not spending his Christmas in loneliness at Usselby Crag. He had come down one day from the Hall to tell them that he was going to York for a week or so, to St. Aldhelm's Vicarage, his friend, John Warburton, being Rector there.

“I hope that fortune and the weather will favour us when you come back again,” said Bartholomew. “I am ashamed to think that we have never yet found our way to Usselby.”

“I always hold professional people ex-

cused from conventional observances," replied George. "Besides, I have a fear that I have never given you any very strong impression that I should be glad to see you. Truth to tell, the place looks so desolate, nay, worse than that, so dilapidated, that I am half-ashamed of it. Nevertheless, come. It will seem less desolate when you have been there."

He had spoken to Bartholomew, but his eyes had sought Genevieve's while he uttered the last sentence; and she knew that he spoke to her alone. Her colour came, and deepened; a little pleasantry died away from her lips unsaid. Did he know what these seldom-recurring admissions and revealings were to her? Did he dream what solemn weight they had? how full they were of grave assurance? Already it seemed that she could need no further assurance. This love was definite enough for this life.

So it was that there could be satisfaction in his absence, contentment in his silence.

Never in her life had there been a time of such full rest, such full sweetness, such full faith in a large and liberal future.

She asked no question of herself, none of

him ; there were none to be asked. The unspoken understanding that was in a glance, in a tone, authenticated every thought of the days to be. It was a time of stillness ; the stillness that precedes rapture ; and it held opportunity for an almost spiritual reverence of the latent felicity that the next moment might unfold. There was no desire to hurry its unfolding ; rather was there desire for the continuance of the present beautiful strangeness ; the present immaterial ties ; the present half-acknowledged sympathies. No certain knowledge could overpass this sweet uncertainty.

The day when the long-promised visit to Usselby came to be made was a bright, windy January day. The leafless trees on the edge of the moor rocked and whitened in the sunshine ; the wind blew pale hollows in the fleeces of the black-faced moorland sheep ; the sea of barren heather was tossing and heaving in dark wild waves for leagues away. It was a day on which to be strong, to be glad, to put away fearfulness if you had any.

The white stony road went winding all the way by the bold edge of Langbarugh Moor.



Below the moor there was a great sweep of common all dotted over with grey boulders. To the left a vast dark fir-wood bounded by freestone walls covered the sloping land that lay between the moor and the low-lying Marishes.

The entrance gate to Usselby was a common five-barred gate in the wall of rude unshapen stone. The drive, which wound between the fir-trees, was a narrow road, full of deep ruts. Tall fronds of fern, still green and graceful, were curving out from beds of warm pine-needles. A squirrel crossed the road; a large handsome magpie dived slowly downward from the blue mystery of the pine-tree shade, another following. Presently some water-fowl rose up suddenly out of a little streamlet, and went chuckling and fluttering away as if quite conscious of providential escape.

The house itself was not out of keeping with its wild surroundings. It was ancient, but you did not think of its date in looking at it; nor did you ask any question as to its architectural order.

It stood a little below the road; the dormer

windows of the upper story projected over the lower; the red tiles of the gabled roof were green and grey and yellow with lichens. Dark yew-trees stood in the terraced gardens; wide grass-grown steps led down under the shade to the great arched doorway. A sundial stood in the middle of the lawn.

The old brown door seemed to open of itself; a tall eager figure came hurriedly forward, holding out a hand to Genevieve, uttering words of cordial welcome. "Come in, come in!" he said. "To think of your walking so far in such a wind as this! You will have to come in here, it is my study; there is no fire anywhere else. Jael won't allow it as a rule, but she would have made an exception if she had known you were coming. . . . Is there a chair free from books anywhere, Mr. Bartholomew?"

"I think I see one in the distance," was the reply. It was a room that had a distance—a long old-fashioned room with a low ceiling, and unexpected recesses. Despite its shabbiness there was a prevailing dark warm tone that lent an air of comfort to it. It might be gloomy on a gloomy day, just when

you desire of a room that it should have some brightness; but all days are not days of darkness. It was not dark to-day. The sun was slanting athwart the mullions of the low window at the other end of the room. Far away beyond, over the green of the cliff-top, there was a streak of dull blue sea against the brighter blue of the sky.

Kirkoswald had been writing, and the contracted lines about his great, square forehead did not smooth themselves out all at once. There were books on either hand, newspapers on the floor, sheets of manuscript still wet on the table.

"I am beginning to have a suspicion that we have interrupted you," said Genevieve, taking the chair he had placed for her by the fire.

"You have; but just at the very point when interruption was needed. I was writing an article for the *Quixotic Review*, and it is already too long. I shall have to spend as much time in cutting it down as I have spent in writing it."

"You might make a pamphlet of it."

"So I might. But do you think anybody

reads pamphlets in this epoch of magazines? Perhaps it might get itself read if I called it a monogram. But thanks for the suggestion. I shall think of it. If you will let me I will talk the thing over with you some day, before I send it off. I know you would be interested. It is connected with something we were speaking of the other day—the life of those to whom life means naught but labour. I would have asked you to listen a little now, but Jael is coming with some tea, and I want you to see the house. I want Mr. Bartholomew's advice about it. What am I to do with such a place?"

"Are you speaking disrespectfully of it?" asked Genevieve, opening her violet-grey eyes a little wider.

"Do you wonder that I should? Do you like it?" asked Kirkoswald with an almost boyish eagerness.

"I like it so much that I feel as if I had always liked it, always known it," said Genevieve, speaking with guileless unreserve. "Indeed, it is strange," she went on; "ever since I saw the twisted chimneys, and the gables, and the dormer windows, I have had

quite a strong impression of having seen the place before."

"It is probably some picture that you remember," said her father.

"It may be," said George; "or it may be another instance of that feeling of reminiscence with which we are all of us acquainted. I believe the secret of it to be a sudden sense of affinity. If you meet a man toward whom you are about to be strongly drawn, between whom and yourself any valuable intercourse is likely to be possible, you never meet as strangers meet. The first glance does away with six months of preliminary acquaintanceship."

Was he thinking of a glance that had met his in Soulsgrif Bight as he spoke? Was he wondering if Genevieve had any glance of his that she cared to remember?

The tea came in presently, the sight of Jael bringing to Genevieve's mind for the first time all that Ailsie Drewe had told of bygone days at Usselby Hall. The old woman's narrow forehead, her suspicious glance, her penurious gown, her independent speech, made that inconceivable piece of

local history to be conceivable in a single moment. Genevieve looked round, wondering from which window the irascible old man had fired upon the carol-singers ; wondering, too, if his son knew all the strange traditions that were being handed on. Looking at George Kirkoswald she could imagine that there had been pain and darkness somewhere in the unforgotten past.

They went over the house ; upstairs into a wide drawing-room with windows that looked seaward ; it was hung with frayed and faded satin damask. The carpet was faded, too, and the worn yellow satin of the gilt-and-white chairs looked too dingy to be spoken of as yellow any more.

"I have been told that my mother used to like this room," said George, with a quiet echo of a dead sadness in his tone. "She used it always till my sisters died ; after that she never left her own room again. . . . That is her portrait," he continued, taking a miniature from its case and putting it into Genevieve's hand with tender touch and movement. It was not a beautiful face, even on ivory, but it was strong and pure and

compassionate. The eyes were her son's eyes, dark, full of thought, comprehensive of human pain.

There were other portraits in the dining-room below. Ladies in lavender simpered with cold, pale lips; fierce old women with double chins looked threateningly down from frames of shabby gold. There was a hunting-man in pink, a naval officer in blue, a legal ancestor in wig and gown. It would have been a curious study to try to make out the spiritual lineage of the present owner of Usselby Hall by help of these varying portraits of his ancestors.

Remembering some such rooms, would it not be possible to find in one's heart a feeling of satisfaction that one's ancestors had never been painted at all; that one stood alone and distinct, so to speak, unhaunted and undaunted by a painted cloud of witnesses to one's heritage of meanness, weakness, vanity, hardness of heart, or general moral obliquity.

There were not many of the portraits that George Kirkoswald could turn to with any feeling of gratification, or even of content.

Some day he would remove the greater part of them, he said to himself this afternoon, looking at them through another's eyes. And even as he said so his imagination painted for him another picture to fill the frame where a faded lady in orange satin stood leaning against a brown tree. The orange-coloured lady's hair, with some one else's to help it, was built up a quarter of a yard above her head; she had puffy cheeks and tiny bead-like eyes of a dull brown. Kirkoswald could hardly help turning to the living picture that stood beside his undignified and unbeautiful ancestress. For one moment he had a wild impulse to ask Bartholomew then and there if he would paint this daughter of his as she stood at that moment, with her fine, sweet face turned upward toward the picture, her curved lips parted with half a smile, her rich masses of golden hair blown into picturesque confusion by the winds of Langbarugh Moor, and touched now by the last slanting ray of sunshine.

Could any artist that ever painted, paint such loveliness as this? And if he achieved that, could he achieve something more? Could



he put on canvas the inner light that was in the eyes; the changeful meanings that passed so swiftly across the mouth, the revelation that was in the ascetic lines of the lower part of the face, the vigorous intellectual activity which stamped the upper part? If it could be done it ought to be done now, he said to himself, feeling instinctively that it was the kind of face that ten years of life would harrow with the wear and tear of twenty. "But, Heaven helping me," he added, "there shall be little wear and tear that I can keep away from her."

Just then something—was it a mere passing shadow?—came suddenly down upon him, darkening his forehead, showing the strong lines about his mouth, the cleft that crossed his lower lip, and was visible again on the broad, firm chin. Genevieve, meeting his eyes, could not but wonder at the sudden change. It had come like a shadow, so it departed, leaving light and gladness behind it. Another room or two had to be inspected, and Mr. Bartholomew had to give his opinion on the capacity of each for improvement. The furniture was of all kinds; so, too, were the

ornaments; but things had been so long in their places together, they had ministered so long to the needs of the same people, that they had acquired a certain harmony which was not without a beauty of its own. There was little beauty of any other kind. The priceless and abundant treasures of ancient china and glass were all packed carefully away out of sight in garrets and cupboards, and the keys were in Jael's pocket—they had been there for close upon five and thirty years now.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## ETHICS AND ÆSTHETICS.

“Where we disavow  
Being keeper to our brother, we’re his Cain.”  
MRS. BROWNING.

GENEVIEVE listened quite silently while her father gave the opinions that were asked of him; and she recognized the fact that they were worthy of being listened to. It seemed as if the old place had stirred his decorative instincts to even more than usual activity.

His ideas were not, of course, the latest modern ideas. He made no mention of sage green or of peacock blue; he did not insist upon screens, or dados, or lily-pots.

“I want to have the thing done once for all,” said Kirkoswald, “and therefore well done.”

"And, of course, you know what precisely the thing is that you wish to have done?"

"Yes; I believe so. I wish to have this house made into a home, a home that shall be a desirable place to live in because of its beauty. And, moreover, I want it doing as soon as may be, since it is evident that I cannot ask Warburton to bring his wife here till it is done."

"If you do all that I should do in your place it will require time," said Bartholomew. "You will want an artist, perhaps two, down from London, who can paint in fresco. I should recommend the Gambier Parry process."

"Yes; you are thinking of the staircase? And there is the drawing-room. The paneling below the picture-space has been painted white. It might be scraped; I should say it is oak."

"Probably. But you would not care for the effect of dark oak in that room; especially as there would be nothing to balance it. Why not have the panels decorated—some of the lighter and brighter historical scenes, for instance? It would have to be

done in flat-painting, and in the palest possible tints. The wall-space above might be gilt and diapered; and above that again you might have a frieze painted to accord with the panels."

"That promises well!" said Kirkoswald, after musing over it a little while. "But if the tints are all to be so pale, how would you get a look of warmth into the room?"

"By means of the hangings, something Indian; nothing can equal the Indian things for good subdued harmonies of rich colour. And you would have your carpet and rugs in keeping."

"And the dining-room?" asked George.

"The dining-room I should leave as it is," replied Mr. Bartholomew, "and this room also, that is, so far as the walls are concerned. Nothing could be finer in its way than this old wainscoting. You might have fireplaces of carved oak, and you will want some tiles, both for the fireplaces and the floor of the hall. You will have to be careful about choosing your tiles—good ones are to be had."

Genevieve had taken no part in the conversation so far; she was not even looking

at the two who were carrying it on ; but one of them was watching the varying expression of her face somewhat closely.

George Kirkoswald had not forgotten that day in the studio, the girl's cry for a reconciler ; nor the instance she had given of need for reconciliation.

"I need hardly ask you if you approve of your father's plans and designs?" he said presently, turning to her with his usual gravity.

"I am thinking them out," she said, "trying to realize them. At first I objected to the idea of Indian hangings in an English room decorated with English historical scenes. Then it occurred to me that the histories of the two countries are now so twined together that it would be rather interesting to have combined associations."

"Thank you for that idea ; I agree with it. And you like the rest?"

"I think the result will touch the thing you aim at—beauty."

"I see," said George, musingly. "And the aim? You sympathize with it only so far?"

"Only so far."

"And suspect yourself of wrong-doing even in that," said her father. "By the way, I believe you have never explained to Mr. Kirkoswald what I am sure must need explanation, the non-Puritanical nature of your own dress, and of such surroundings as you possess at Netherbank?"

"No; I have not. I have left Mr. Kirkoswald to suppose for himself a fresh instance of feminine inconsistency."

"Or rather a fresh instance of graceful and womanly concession," George interposed, "which is above all consistencies whatever in such matters as this. . . . I have understood."

"Have you also understood my attitude in the matter?" asked Bartholomew. "I do not understand it myself. I never pretend to understand the strong human craving for material beauty. Men will ruin themselves to possess it; though they know that the possession will add a new anguish to death itself. Think of Cardinal Mazarin dragging himself from his death-bed to walk round his picture-galleries for the last time, exclaiming, 'See this beautiful Correggio, and this Venus

of Titian, and this incomparable Deluge of Antonio Caracci! Ah! and I must leave all this, I must leave all this!’ It makes one’s heart ache to read of it; but it does not enable one to comprehend the secret that lies behind. I dare say you know the second volume of ‘Modern Painters,’ and Ruskin’s idea that all pure beauty is neither more nor less than a shadow of something to be found in God Himself. If that be so, and I think it is, it will account for much that we take no note of now; it will make plain much that we misconceive. Who can express in words the effect upon his own soul of a sunset, of a storm at sea, of truly grand music, of a really good picture, of a really fine statue? And these latter are but form, and colour, and sound.”

“Only form, and colour, and sound,” repeated Kirkoswald. “And yet so long as a man’s soul can be reached through his senses it is important to consider what shall be put before him for his senses to entertain. There are men who can be stirred, uplifted, through their senses alone. It seems as if the straight soul-avenues of thought, of spiritual percep-



tion, were closed for them. Over men of this stamp music often has a power that is quite inexplicable. Others find form and colour more stimulating; and again there are men who can be moved by all three. Perhaps I am among the latter; so you will understand why I am anxious to arrive at some sufficient reason for making my house beautiful, or leaving it unbeautiful."

"Is there no middle course?" asked Genevieve, smiling. "Must you either spend some thousands of pounds, or go on with frayed curtains and faded carpets?"

"Softly, Genevieve dear!" said Mr. Bartholomew. "Softly; I think you should leave the question of cost till Mr. Kirkoswald raises it himself."

"Then I must leave one of the most important issues of the whole matter," said the girl, speaking firmly. "If these things that you suggest could be had without money, I would say, have them by all means; and as soon as possible, let us all have them. There is no inherent harm in them; it is conceivable, as you say, that there may be good; they are most certainly full of delight, quite

pure delight. It is the idea of the money they represent that takes the delight out of them for me. If I were walking up your frescoed staircase I should hear the cry of children who cry for hunger; I should see the white wan faces of women worn with working for bread."

There was a silence, a somewhat lengthened silence.

George Kirkoswald sat looking into the fire; it was leaping, blazing; he felt the comfortable warmth of it; but he felt also a chillness that the fire could not reach.

A minute or two before he had seen his painted walls, his historic panels, quite plainly; now it was as if he saw them fading before his eyes. The knowledge that the old damp stains were still there was a satisfaction to him.

Genevieve broke the silence.

"You will not misjudge me," she said, turning an earnest face toward George Kirkoswald; "and you will not suppose that I am judging you, or meaning to legislate for you for a single moment. I told you the other day," she went on, her lips

breaking into a smile as she spoke, "that I had not stated my case effectively. So far as I remember, I did not state it at all. I hadn't the courage, and went on wandering outside of it. Let me try now to say what I meant then. . . . I did not mean to imply that there was or could be any special wrong in surrounding one's self with any and every kind of material beauty one could obtain. It is possible that the time may come when every desire of the kind may be satisfied without a hint from conscience of anything but approval. Ugliness, commonness, unseemliness, will be considered as blots, mistakes. . . . But has that day come yet? . . . Can any of us dare to say to ourselves in our best and most secret and most sacred moments that this is the time to decorate finely, to dress rarely, to add picture to picture, and ornament to ornament, while all about us the poor are crying silently, or suffering patiently, or turning to stone, in the effort to endure the hardness we do not even see they are enduring? *We do not want to see, and they know it.* And yet they take off their hats and curtsey, and do us little

kindnesses when they can, as if they would express a penitence for their unprosperous days. In all this world there is nothing more pathetic, more strangely touching, than the bearing of the respectable poor towards the heedless or apathetic rich! . . . If I might ask for a gift that should be more to me than all else in this world, I would certainly ask for the pen of a ready writer, ready enough and powerful enough to awaken the souls who are at ease concerning their daily bread, and who never see on any human face a sign that is significant to them of human need for the compassion that is divine. . . . These are they who will ask in such amaze—‘*Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered?*’”

\* \* \* \* \*

The conversation did not end there. It went on gravely awhile, moving in and out, being, as it were, the silver thread that the Master-workman uses to draw His work together.

Genevieve and her father went home in the twilight, and George Kirkoswald went with them to the farther edge of the moor.

As he went back alone a young moon, like a tiny sickle of pure gold, hung over the dark purple distance; the sky was one vast, clear gradation of tint and tone, from faint amber to indigo blue. Late as it was, a robin was chirping on a leafless sloe-thorn.

And George Kirkoswald was questioning himself as he went. Seeing Genevieve Bartholomew at his own home that day, watching her as she moved about his rooms, listening to her foot on the stair, to her voice as she spoke, he had recognized the things that alone could make his home homelike. Two souls with one high aim, two minds with one strong will, two hearts beating in tune to one impulse—the rest might be there, or not there. Would she decide? Had he ground enough for hoping that one day she would come and say, “This let us do, for the sake of seemliness, and that let us not do, for the sake of Christ”?

Then, thinking again, he knew that she had said these things. If she never came to Usselby, nor spoke of it again, she had drawn for him a line over which he knew that he could not step unarrested.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### OUT OF THE PAST.

“ But do thy worst to steal thyself away,  
For term of life thou art assured mine ;  
And life no longer than thy love will stay,  
For it depends upon that love of thine.”

SHAKESPEARE, *Sonnet XCII.*

It was acknowledged throughout the district that the downward tendency of things at Hunsgarth Haggs was in no way attributable to ignorance or mismanagement on the part of Miss Craven.

There was no farm of its size in the neighbourhood that had been more carefully dealt with in respect of rotation of crops, abundance of lime, and almost ceaseless tillage. There were fields of Miss Craven's where the labourers seemed almost to live ; but these same fields were not profitable. The

soil was stiff clay, the water stood in pools between the lands, not seeming to find its way to such drainage as existed; and the yield of corn was only good in unusually good years. As for the pasture-lands, they were full of moss and whin and picturesque bramble-brakes, and therefore failed to feed the number of cattle they should have fed.

It had been different once, Dorothy said. Labour had cost less, there had been no American supplies to cause fluctuations in the market, and more than that, there had been no lack of capital. It would have been hard to say exactly how the capital had been drained away; the draining process had probably been going on a long time when that historic snow-storm had buried Joseph Craven's splendid flock of sheep in the hollows of Langbarugh Moor. The old man had felt that to be a kind of final stroke, and he never rallied from it.

There had been a touching scene one morning. Old Joseph had lain awake all night—perhaps he had lain awake many nights; but on this particular morning he felt as if his night's sleeplessness had wrought

some change in him. He had gone to his daughter's room quite early—it was hardly light—and she had been roused to a very keen and startling dread by seeing him standing there with an account-book or two, and a box with a few sovereigns in it. There was a strangely haggard look on his face.

“There's nobody but you, Dorothy—nobody but you,” the old man said in a faint, plaintive voice. “If you'll not take things in hand there's nobody else; they must go, Dorothy, if you don't look to them.”

Dorothy watched him silently for a moment, then she made him sit down by a little table, while she prepared him a cup of tea. A rose-tinted light was coming up from the sea, flooding all the room; the old man's white head was bowed over his trembling hands. He could hardly turn the pages before him. He seemed as if he found it difficult to understand what he himself had written there. Yet Dorothy could see that he was, so to speak, watching himself; that he had mental insight enough to know that that insight was failing. The effort he made was heart-rending, though he made it so



quietly. There was money borrowed here, money owing there. "You're listening, Dorothy?" he said, now and again. "You're trying to understand?" And Dorothy assured him to his satisfaction that all was plain to her comprehension; all that so far had been placed before her. But there was a good deal behind yet, confusions, intricacies, arrears of rent, arrears of interest. The old man's utterance grew less clear, less firm; his voice trembled; then it gave way altogether.

"I can't see, Dorothy—Dorothy, I can't remember; I can't understand!"

That was the end of effort—a passionate burst of wild, unrestrained weeping that would not be comforted; of sobs and tears that seemed like a great upheaval of the strong man's strength. . . . That was the end. He was never himself again after that, and it was Dorothy's turn to be strong—strong and faithful. From that morning she had done her best; the best that might be done by a woman in a world of hard and unscrupulous men.

She had had offers enough of help, some

of them from men who had professed themselves her father's friends; but no keener strokes had fallen upon her life than those that had taught her what such offers meant. She was not an over-sensitive woman; but many a time her brain had almost reeled under the sense of her own helplessness against wrong and oppression.

Still Dorothy Craven had borne up and borne on bravely; fighting where fighting was to be done, and enduring where fighting was of no avail. None but God took count of it. None but God. In all the wide world there was neither man nor woman to whom Dorothy could turn when her soul fainted under her burdens. Some of the people about saw that she had burdens; they did not fail to gossip of that; and they all of them knew that deep under her business trials she had another trial lying still, if indeed it did lie still.

It had all happened long ago, when Dorothy Craven was quite a girl, a proud, handsome, dark-eyed girl not yet twenty, too proud to be on cordial terms with the daughters and sons of the other farmers of

the district. . . . When the worst came, the old proverb that declares that pride always goes before a fall fitted in finely ; and Dorothy was made to perceive how pleased her neighbours were to have the satisfaction of fitting it. She had never forgotten that.

Genevieve Bartholomew had never heard the history ; but, as it has been said, she had reasons for believing that there was a history.

Of late the Bartholomews had known, as everybody else had known, that something very like a crisis was coming on at the Haggs. There had been five bad harvests in succession ; cattle had been found dead in the fields ; a horse that had fallen over the edge of a stone quarry on the moor had had to be shot, and the result of all this had been that Mr. Damer, the agent for the Yarrell Croft estate, had had to consent to take Miss Craven's rent by instalments. Further than this, it was known that she was wanting to sell one of her best milch cows ; of course people said that this was in order to enable her to meet the tithes.

The confirmation of it all was there written on Dorothy's face. Her mouth had com-

pressed itself till the droop at the corners was a settled thing ; her colour was fading, leaving only a network of fine red lines on her thin cheeks ; her eyes looked out at you with strangely mingled expressions ; pain, defiance, endurance, each came by turns. Had there been a little wistfulness mingled with these of late, Genevieve asked herself ? A little wonder if anywhere in the world there might be compassion ?

One fine February day Genevieve set out for a walk ; she would go up to the moor, she said to herself, and she would call at the Haggs on her way. She had not seen Miss Craven for some days ; and the last sight of her had not been reassuring. There had been signs plain enough to be seen ; but not easy of comprehension.

There was not much promise of spring anywhere. A few pale snowdrops stood with folded petals in the garden ; some lily bulbs were thrusting up strong green leaves ; there was a thrush singing on the boughs of the ash-tree by the stile.

Genevieve went upward in the sunshine as lightly as a bird. There were a few daisies

by the roadside ; a young oak-tree had some red crisp leaves on it, last year's leaves. A man was coming round by the bramble-brake, whistling "Barbara Allan," looking hot and angry, swinging his arms about.

"Eh, it's you then, Miss Bartholomew, is it?" shouted Mr. Crudas, his grey whiskers seeming to stand out on either side of his keen red face a little more fiercely than usual. "You'll be going up to see Miss Dorothy, Ah reckon? Well, I hope she'll be civil to you. It's more than she's been to me. Ay, it's more than she's been to me for many a year back. But I hev'n't given up hopin' yet; an' what's more, Ah don't mean to give up. You can tell her that if she gives you a chance o' speakin'."

Genevieve could only guess what it was that Mr. Crudas was determined to hope for so persistently. Perhaps she looked rather perplexed.

"Ah'll nut keep ya stannin', miss," said Ishmael, with polite thoughtfulness. "Ah'll turn about, an' walk up t' hill a bit; Ah can saäy what Ah want to saäy better, so . . . Ah've thought many a time 'at mebbe you

could put things afore Dorothy in a different waäy fra what Ah can put 'em. Ya'll know all about it, Ah reckon?"

"I don't know anything about it," said Genevieve. "I cannot even guess what should make Miss Craven ungracious to you. I fancied—well, I fancied you were old friends!"

"Friends! It doesn't seem to me so very many years sen we were lovers—just on t' point o' bein' married! 'Tis a good bit too. Dorothy was only turned o' nineteen, an' Ah was but just thirty. All t' country side knew on it; for there was mony a better-like an' better-to-do chap nor me would ha' married Dorothy Craven if she'd given 'em a chance. Not but what we were well anuff off, my father and me; an' them 'at said we'd gettin' t' bit we had wi' smugglin' tell'd a lee—beggin' yer pardon, miss. Ah might ha' said a lie, as Ah's talkin' tiv a laädy!"

"Smuggling! But was there smuggling in this neighbourhood so recently as that?"

"Ay, an' not a little neither, an' Ah'll nut say but what Ah knew more aboot it nor Ah sud ha' done. An' Ah'll nut lay t' blame o'

them 'at's dead neither; for when a man's gettin' on for thirty years of aäge he's oäd aneaf to know right fra wrang. An' Ah knew it was wrang all t' time; an' for that reason Ah never meddled wi' nowt o' t' sort, but when Ah couldn't fairly help myself. An' Ah couldn't help myself that neet, an' Dorothy knew that as weel as Ah did; an' if she'd had mair pity an' less pride she'd ha' had an easier life nor she hes had. An' it's as much for her sake as my oän 'at Ah want her to gi waäy at last. But she's as stiff as a stoän—ay, as stiff as a stoän in a wall, she's been fra that daäy to this."

"Then she thinks that you were to blame?" asked Genevieve, knowing that she must be well up in her case before she undertook to plead with Miss Craven.

"Ay, an' she's right anuff there. Ah was to blame. But what could Ah do? We were goin' to have a bit of a spree at Swarth-cliff Top—we'd allus had a spree o' my birthday—an' poor old father, he kept it up to the last. An' that year 'at Ah's talkin' on he'd set down to goä to Blakehoue Baäy t' day afore, an' just a few hours afore he sud

ha' started he was ta'en bad all of a sudden wi' rheumatics; an' Ah were forced to goä i'stead. Ah wasn't nut to saäy eager to goä, but goä Ah did; an' got my two tubs o' Hollands—two fairish-sized tubs they were; an' Ah slung 'em one on either side o' t' oäd galloway, an' kept 'em partly covered wi' t' skirts o' my father's greät-coat. Of course Ah didn't start fra t' Baäy till 't was darkish; an' when Ah gat te t' toon, 'twas as dark as onybody could wish. But as bad luck wud ha' 't, t' bridge was open for a ship to goä through, an' she'd stuck i' the bridge-way; an' there was a gay few folks waitin' to be across; an' Ah was about i' t' middle o' t' crood afore Ah saw 'at there was one. Ah durstn't turn back then for fear o' raisin' suspicion, an' Ah durstn't stand still for fear 'at folks wad see t' tubs. Ah was in a des-pert takin' for awhile, when all of a sudden Ah bethowt me to use my spurs a bit, and mak' t' oäd galloway rear. 'Twas almost laughable to see t' folks flyin' back, an' Ah was left i' peäce a bit. But t' crood seän closed in again, one pressin' behind another to get ower t' bridge as seän as 't was shut,



an' I had to keep usin' my spurs ivery noo an' then. Another minute an' Ah sud ha' been saäfe, when up comes a man oot of a dark corner. 'Let us have a look at those kegs, my friend!' he said, in a sort of a mincin', south-country tongue. An' Ah knew 'twas all up wi' ma then. He was one o' t' coästguard, an' there was mair on 'em behind; an' folks com' clusterin' round like bees round a burtree. . . . Well, the upshot was 'at Ah didn't see Swarthcliff Top neä mair—well, t' next winter. My poor old father had been buried just a week when I got heame. An' fra that daäy to this Dorothy Craven's niver spoken me a civil word to swear by."

Genevieve was silent a minute or two. It was certainly something of a shock to her to find herself talking on friendly terms to a man who had been a whole long year in prison for smuggling. It was not difficult to understand Miss Craven's attitude now.

The girl could not help thinking over it all from Miss Craven's side—the side of a proud, high-spirited woman, sensitive to her neighbours' opinion. And she did not doubt but

that there had been wounded love as well as wounded pride. Though the story was short, it evidently covered long years of suffering.

Ishmael Crudas expressed repentance for his wrong-doing, though, sooth to say, it had seemed to him that his error had consisted in his being found out. His regret and sorrow for the consequences to Miss Craven was altogether another thing; but if she had suffered, so had he. Since she had refused to enter Swarthcliff Top as its mistress he had sworn that no other woman should enter there, and he had kept his word. He had men-servants and maid-servants on his farm, but no woman crossed the threshold of his big, dismal house, not even Martha Haggets, who did his washing. Ishmael Crudas had laid it down as a condition that her husband should take it home. It was a lonely life for a man, and uncongenial; but if Dorothy Craven could make her days hard and her life solitary, so could he. She could never reproach him in that; she should never say that the punishment had fallen upon herself alone. Ishmael Crudas had said that he had not done hoping yet, and this was evidently

true. Just now it seemed to him that circumstance was working very certainly towards the fulfilment of his desires.

“There isn’t a chance for her, miss; there isn’t a chance. She’s done despart well for a woman, but she’s had ivery thing ageän her fra t’ start. There’s misery anuff afore her if she will hold on i’ this waäy. An’ she’s nowt to deä but saäy half a word—half a word ’ud do for Ishmael Crudas; an’ there she’d be, mistress o’ Swarthcliff Top—as tidy a farm as you’ll find i’ the three Ridings, an’ all my oän; not a steän nor a sod mortgaged to nobody. Ah’ve had things settled i’ my oän mind this mony a year—ay, down to the varry chairs old Joseph an’ Barbara ’ud ha’ to sit on, an’ the corner where they’d sit. Dorothy knows they would want for nowt ’at money could get ’em; neither sud she, an’ she knaws that an’ all. . . . But seems as if ’twas all o’ no use. Ah’ve gone ower ’t all ageän to-daäy, but ’twas like teamin’ water intiv a sieve. . . . Mebbe it ’ud be different if you could saäy a word, miss. Dorothy thinks a lot o’ what you saäy!”

There was just a touch of gentle enviousness about the last sentence. The man's shrill voice softened and broke as he said it: "Dorothy thinks a lot o' what you saäy." It was almost as if he had lifted a veil for a moment, and had given a glimpse of the strong, patient love that was in him. It must have been very patient; perhaps it was patience that had worked such hope—hope that had never failed though the years had counted well-nigh twice the service of Jacob for Rachel.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## LOVE AND PRIDE.

“ But never either found another  
To free the hollow heart from paining.  
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,  
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder ;  
A dreary sea now flows between,  
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,  
Shall wholly do away, I ween,  
The marks of that which once hath been.”

COLERIDGE.

NOT wishing to step straight into the middle of milking-time, Genevieve had to hurry upward toward the Haggs. Miss Craven, strange to say, was standing near the garden gate, looking pale and abstracted. She had only a faint smile of welcome, yet she was glad that Genevieve had come. “ I was beginning to think you’d forgot me,” she said, in a tone of quite new humility.

It was a little difficult for Genevieve to pass at once and uninvited through the outworks that we all of us, in our pitiful human helplessness, use for self-defence. Do not these very outworks help sometimes in bringing about final defeat? If the enemy cannot get beyond them, neither can the friend who would bring relief. There ought to be a password. Was there, once upon a time, a word that people used?

Genevieve thought herself very daring, but she could see that she was raising no resentment. Resentment! Poor Miss Craven! Her outworks had been strong, and very high. Neither friend nor enemy had seen that the years behind them had been years of self-conflict, of pride that was all pain, of love that was all sorrow, of strong resolution understruck by strong yearning, of seeming self-sufficiency where in reality there was one long cry of acknowledgment that the days were full of burdens too heavy to be borne.

And yet, even yet, there were slight signs of relenting.

"I don't know how it is with me," she said, looking out with weary eyes across to

where the sail-studded sea was gleaming. "I don't know how it is. I feel as if years ago I'd passed beyond the point where givin' way was possible. I've hardened myself till I couldn't yield if I would, an' if I did it seems as if life would be as bitter as gall when I'd done it."

"And yet—yet you said just now that you do still care for Mr. Crudas?"

"Care! Some day you'll know what such carin' means, if you don't now," said Miss Craven, catching the sudden pink flush as it rose to Genevieve's cheeks. . . . "But no; you don't know what it is you're speakin' of; no more does he. He never knew that I'd all my weddin' clothes lyin' ready down to the last thing. I was young, an' eager, an' ower sure o' things; an' I made all ready as if there weren't no chance o' nothin' happenin'. Think of it, o' my weddin' gown an' bonnet lying locked away out o' sight ever since afore you were born! The day had been settled on, everybody knew it; an' when it came, an' him i' prison, I felt as if I'd be glad to know 'at never another day 'ud break for me."

For Dorothy it was as if it were all happening over again as she stood there, it came back so vividly, so full of strong pain; and even Genevieve felt as if it were hard to realize that the whole of her life, and more, was lying between.

“You say you promised that you would say a word or two for him,” Miss Craven went on; “but I don’t think you’ll say much ’at I heven’t said to myself. I’ve had time enough. All the best o’ my days has gone i’ sorrow—*they’re gone!* If I marry him now will they come back again. Could I ever be young again as I was then, an’ full o’ hope an’ happiness? . . . Happiness! I’ve forgotten what it’s like. I’ve forgotten what everything’s like but loneliness, an’ hard work, an’ dread o’ failin’. Do you think I could forget these things now, an’ take up my life again where he broke it off? If I could forget, then I might forgive; but I don’t feel like forgettin’, nor forgivin’ neither. I’ve known what it was to feel a good deal more like goin’ mad wi’ tryin’.”

“Is that your greatest difficulty—that you can’t forgive?” asked Genevieve sympa-



thetically. "Do you know, I think I can understand that. I have always felt as if forgiveness of a person who had actually and wilfully wronged another was one of the very hardest virtues that a human being could be called upon to practise. But, then, the kind of wrong that I think I could not forgive must have been done deliberately, and out of *malice prepense*. This wrong that was done to you was not like that; there was no thought of wronging you at all. And surely it has been repented of? I think I could never help forgiving a person who repented, who was but ever so little sorry for having done me harm!"

"Well, wait till you've tried! I hope that'll never be; but if it is think o' what I've told you to-day. Do you think I wouldn't forgive if I could? Do you think I like livin' out all my days full o' sourness, an' bitterness, an' hardness toward all the world? Do you think I wouldn't like to be as you are—gentle, an' pleasant-spoken, an' kind to everybody? . . . Sometimes I've hated to look at you, because you were so young, an' free from trouble, an' had such an easy, light-

some sort o' life. The contrast was brought ower near. But don't go dwellin' o' that. It's past. I'm glad you came to-day; I'm glad there's one to understand a little. There's been nobody to care. I've niver said as much to any human soul as I've said to you."

"You will not repent having said it!"

"Yes, I shall. I shall be wild wi' myself for a bit. Then I shall be glad, mebbe."

"And after that?"

"After that it'll all be as it was again."

"Then I have made no impression whatever?"

Dorothy hesitated a moment, then she smiled a little—a strangely sweet smile for so sad a woman.

"It won't do Ishmael Crudas no harm my knowin' 'at you take his part. Nobody never took it afore to me."

"I cannot help it. I cannot but feel sorry for him because of his long repentance, of his keen desire to make up for the ill that was done. Has his patience never touched you at all, not even a little?"

"He's been more than patient," Miss

Craven admitted. "He's done me many a good turn 'at I've only found out after from others; an' he's borne more fra me than I ever thought any man would ha' borne from a woman. An' I've seen all that, an' more, plain enough. But if ever I've had a thought o' relentin' I've had ten o' bitterness an' desire for revenge to make up for it. . . . But I heven't felt so vengeful lately. I've been ower much broken down wi' other things. An' that's what folks 'ud say if I was to give in now. I should be a laughing-stock for the country-side. It 'ud be said 'at I'd had to go to Swarthcliff Top to save myself fra havin' to go to the workhouse."

Genevieve sighed. It was very perplexing to her inexperience to find what a strong reserve of motive Miss Craven had accumulated; still she had an instinctive feeling that some of the arguments were being brought forth in the hope that they might be met; that they might be overthrown in the meeting. Genevieve did her best. She expressed amazement at the idea that any one should care for the gossip of "the country-side;" and she almost surprised herself by her own

boldness in daring to suggest that Miss Craven had strengthened herself in her pride until pride ruled as her master—but she did dare. “Is not that the root of all your bitterness?” she said, speaking gently and pleadingly. “Is not that the secret of your inability to yield? . . . You must forgive me if I say anything I ought not to say. Think that I am your sister; and let me speak as a sister might; let me try to show you what I think I see. It seems to me that if one can see rightly where a hindrance or a difficulty lies, it is so much easier to get over it. And I do want you to get over this difficulty. I do want to know that you are not intending to go on darkening the days that might be so bright; so different for yourself, and for another. And why is it all? What is the real strait through which you cannot pass? What is it but a feeling that you can neither define nor defend?”

Miss Dorothy listened in silence, but it was easy to see that it was not offended silence. No; there was no offence in it; but only pain, only a keen sense of isolation. The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and

no other heart can know it. This is true always; but more sadly is it true when the sorrow is one that has linked itself with the years, woven itself with the life, coloured every thought, darkened every joy, and embittered every grief. How should this girl understand? How should she be able to go back over such a life, to enter into its fine mesh of miseries, its coarse humiliations; to have sympathy with its calm despairs, its wild unrests, its ceaseless longing for some reparation that should be as great as the suffering had been? If Miss Craven had a favourite passage in the Bible it was certainly that passage of the grand Psalm of Moses, wherein he prays for adequate compensation: "Comfort us again now after the time that Thou hast plagued us; and for the years wherein we have suffered adversity."

When Genevieve left the Haggs she did not carry with her much sense of assurance. No word had been said that could be construed as a word of actual concession. Yet surely Ishmael Crudas had some ground for his hoping; surely he had seen, as Genevieve had seen, that there was, unsuspected perhaps

by Miss Craven herself, a tremulous wavering of emotion, a balancing of thought, a sense of fainting under the strife, betokening anything rather than a continuance of stern unyieldingness.

How could it be that such unyieldingness had been possible so long? Genevieve wondered over it as she walked up the Ravengates toward the moor. She would just go up there and watch the sun sink down into the far distance. It was worth while walking a long way to see that, to watch the warm purple of the moor quivering into the haze of pale daffodil yellow that hung across the west. The sun was only a little way from the horizon now. The furzy hillocks all about caught the lingering light, kept it awhile, then it faded slowly, tenderly away. It was like watching a friend who was saying "good-bye," saying it so gracefully that sorrow lost itself in admiration.

But no; it was not "good-bye" that the friend was saying; it was "good evening." Genevieve had heard the step, and recognized it even before she turned. Her face

flushed with a sudden crimson as George Kirkoswald took her hand in his, and held it for a moment, with a strong, warm clasp. They were silent save for the word that the one glance said.

There are always some moments in the one true love of a lifetime that are to be remembered when other moments are forgotten. They have no event in them ; there is nothing to be described unless you could describe the stillness of them. They are not moments of hopefulness, nor do they hold the fruition of hope ; they hold nothing—nothing but the still, sweet sense of the sureness of all things—all things worth knowing, or being, or having, so far as this life is concerned.

“I have been down to Netherbank,” said Kirkoswald, breaking the silence at last ; “and I also called at Hunsgarth Haggs, in the hope of finding you there.”

“Did Miss Craven tell you that I had come up to the moor ?”

“Yes. Poor Miss Craven ! Did you leave her in tears ?”

“In tears ! No, but very sorrowful. She is in trouble, and I am troubled for her. I

was thinking of her when you came ; wondering if one could do anything to relieve her mind but a little from the terrible strain of responsibility. . . . Do you know what her life has been ? ”

“ I have heard something of it—only lately. It is a sad history altogether ; but one cannot help being struck by her bravery ; I mean with regard to the farm, by her splendid perseverance. As for the other matter, well, perhaps I admire her less there. But, then, I do not understand ; perhaps I do not know the truth. Do you know it ? Do you think she ever really cared for Crudas ? ”

“ She has cared always—she cares still. I think it is grander than all else in her that her love has never changed—never wavered. She might have been married many times—my father told me that—but she has never cared except for this one man, who has made all the best of her life to be one long sorrow. . . . I think it is beautiful ! ”

“ Yes, it is beautiful ! ” said Kirkoswald, looking into Genevieve’s face, and seeing there the deep interest, the keen animation that awoke there always to the lightest human



touch. "It is beautiful," he said again. "I think love is always beautiful!"

"If it be true," said Genevieve, watching the descending sun and the deepening yellow haze. The two were still standing by the edge of the furze-brake where they had met.

"Yes, if it be true," repeated Kirkoswald, a sudden inquiry leaping, so to speak, into his eyes. "What made you say that?" he asked in a low tone that had concern in it.

Genevieve smiled at his seriousness. "I said it because we were speaking of love that is beautiful; and it seems to me that its whole beauty lies in its truthfulness—in its unchanging truthfulness."

George Kirkoswald remained silent awhile. Lately he had been conscious of unrest—of dread. This great and growing love that was dominating him so utterly could hardly be said to have sole possession of his faculties. There was room for fear—fear for the effect of disclosure and confession. How could one so simple-minded, so noble in intent, so direct in aim as Genevieve, understand a blind swerving, an almost inexcusable self-delusion, and all that had followed upon such a delu-

sion? And if she should not understand, what then? Would she have pity? Would she condemn? Would her love shrink back in disesteem?

Kirkoswald had made up his mind that he would confess that long-past mistake of his before he urged his love; and the resolution was a hindrance in his path already. The confession would be so hard to make. Had not the word that had just now been said made it even harder?

"I suppose," he began after a time, "that you could never understand that there might be two kinds of love?"

"Yes," replied Genevieve, "I think I could. I think I could see that there might be a false love and a true."

"And what should you think of a man who had been betrayed, so to speak, into a love that was not true?"

"I should say that he had betrayed himself!"

"And you would hold him in contempt?"

"Not without knowing something of the circumstances," said Genevieve in her gentle, serious way. Was there anything like a sus-

picion dawning across her mind, a suspicion that George's earnestness had a personal motive behind it? Be that as it might, she had made an opportunity. Here, if anywhere, was an opening for Kirkoswald to speak. Never could any moment more favourable than this await him. The very word had been said that could more than any other word charm out from his heart that hidden thing that lay coiled there like a snake, certain to spring sooner or later, unless it should be drawn out by some sweet note of human music. That note had been sounded, but the lip that should have moved to its sounding remained closed. There was a pause, and the sun dropped down behind the moor, putting an end to the day, and marking the oncoming of the long, drear night.

Stay from blaming Kirkoswald. The strongest men have moments of weakness, of failure of insight, and it must be that some such moments are fatal.

He could not have told you—not then, nor later—what it was that had held him from this thing that he had required of himself. He had decreed that it should be done, and he

was not given to the making of vain decrees. Perhaps it was the unexpectedness of the opportunity; or it might be that the moment was too sweet to be rudely broken in upon without consideration as to the manner of doing it. There was no point at which he had said, "I will not do it now." He had waited, overmastered by his own emotion even as he did so, for some impulse to compel him to his task; but there had been no movement strong enough to be called an impulse. His sole satisfaction afterwards lay in the fact that he had not made resistance; there had been nothing to be resisted.

There was no idea in his mind then that the moment had been decisive in any way. There would be other opportunities; and he would be better prepared, more on the alert to take advantage of them. It was less easy to talk seriously now that they were going down the rugged Ravengates. They went silently for the most part; silently happy, silently certain of happiness to be.

"You are not to brood *too* intently over Miss Craven's troubles," said George as they stopped at the stile to exchange a parting

word. He spoke with all the tender authoritativeness that Genevieve loved so much to hear. "If you will promise me that, I will promise to think the matter over myself," he added.

"Ah! then you are thinking of something already," Genevieve exclaimed, turning her face to his with delight written on every feature. "You see some gleam of hope, or you would not speak so."

"I see some very brilliant gleams of hope," said Kirkoswald, speaking with a quiet yet ardent eagerness; and taking Genevieve's hand in his as he spoke, he held it there in his strong grasp. "The whole world is radiant with hope to me now," he exclaimed; "and it is such a radiance as I have never seen before, nor dreamed of. . . . Heaven keep it unclouded!"

He raised Genevieve's hand, pressing the small white wrist with a passionate respectfulness to his lips for one moment; then, with a glance that pled eloquently for pardon, he turned away.

For an instant it seemed cruel that he should go—strange that he should be so

equal to the pain of parting. But it was only for an instant. The echo of his footstep died softly into the distance; the silver stars came out overhead; the entrancement of still, sweet restfulness came down through the twilight. It was an entrancement that did not depart with the twilight; it stayed, and dwelt under the thatched roof, over which the thick ivy was clustering, and made of the life lived there one long act of fervent gratitude.

END OF VOL. I.







